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OF THE

EPISTLES

FROM THE

YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

IN LONDON,

TO THE

QUARTERLY & MONTHLY MEETINGS

IN

GREAT BRITAIN, IRELAND,

AND ELSEWHERE,

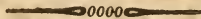
FROM

1675 TO 1820;

BEING FROM THE

FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF THAT MEETING

TO THE PRESENT TIME.



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1821.



ANNUAL EPISTLES

FROM THE

YEARLY MEETING

IN LONDON

TO THE

QUARTERLY AND MONTHLY MEETINGS

OF FRIENDS

IN GREAT-BRITAIN AND ELSEWHERE.

EPISTLE I—1675.

TO FRIENDS AND BRETHREN, BELONGING TO THE QUARTERLY AND MONTHLY MEETINGS THROUGHOUT ENGLAND AND WALES, GREETING.

These are to signify, that at two sundry meetings in London; one being on the 27th, and the other on the 31st day of the Third Month, 1675, Many Public-Friends and Brethren of the nation being present, these things were considered, and concluded to be intimated to Friends and Brethren in the counties throughout the nation, about the SUFFERINGS of FRIENDS.

First, That Friends of every Quarterly Meeting respectively, for each county where Friends do or may suffer for the truth of Christ Jesus, do appoint and send up a faithful understanding Friend, to meet with Friends at London, the 18th day of the Eighth Month next; that they, together with those Friends appointed here in London, may consider and advise together, for the help, ease, and relief of such Friends as are or may be in suffering; and to endeavour to stop and prevent the persecutors and destroyers, by such lawful and just means as may be found out and made use of, in order to ease the oppressed.

One end of this intended meeting being also that Friends may obtain such a general understanding of proceedings, both in the city and country, about sufferings, as that those Friends who come up may the better inform and advise with those concerned in the respective Monthly and Quarterly Meetings: so that Friends may be the more capable to assist one another in such cases.

Secondly, That the Friends appointed to come up to London, as abovesaid, do bring with them the several cases of those under present sufferings and grievances on truth's account, with copies of the mittimusses, calendars, warrants, and records against the sufferers; as also a list of their names who have died in prison; with the whole value of goods taken, exactly and briefly stated; with witnesses' names and hands to the account of such their sufferings, and the cruelties and illegal proceedings of their adversaries; which otherwise would seem incredible to those in power, when they are laid before them.

Thirdly, According to that understanding given us of God (our intention and end being for the help of the distressed, and ease of the oppressed, and for the peace and universal good of the churches of Christ) we do tenderly advise and exhort all who are concerned, that such honest and faithful Friends, who have freedom to move, and endeavour to stop the persecutors and destroyers, and to procure any lawful and just remedy or ease for themselves or others in sufferings (as the truth will allow of, and the law will afford) be not discouraged, or reflected upon, in such their endeavours, by any Friend or Friends professing the truth; but rather, in true love and tenderness, be assisted and encouraged in their respective Monthly and Quarterly Meetings; that the cruelties and oppressions (which also under pretence of law are committed) tending to the ruin of innocent families may not lie hid, but be laid before those in power to redress them. And that the just ends (a christian care of Friends and their meetings about sufferings) may in no-wise be prejudiced or hindered by any professing the name of the Lord amongst us.

Yet this is not in the least to encourage any either to contention, or to take any indirect course at law, to the prejudice of truth, moiling themselves, or giving advantage to the adversary.

Fourthly, That Friends, in the several Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, keep exact and plain accounts and records of all their sufferings, in their books; with the names of the witnesses (Friends or others) to every eminent case where the suffering is great; and especially where it exceeds the severity of the law. And always to note in the margin to know how far they took out copies of them to send to London; and to begin again where they left off, as sufferings are further added; that they may not for the future be sent up confusedly, nor the same twice over.

So (in true love to all you our faithful Friends and brethren, to

whom the care of these things is committed) written and subscribed, on behalf of the meeting aforesaid, by

Your dear Friends and brethren,

G. Whitehead,	John Whitehead,
Alex. Parker,	Tho. Salthouse,
James Batt,	Richard Pinder.

*London, the 4th of the
Fourth Month, 1675.*

These hereafter named, or the greater part, are appointed to meet the Friends of the country, when they come up to London, about the sufferings.

Gerard Roberts,	James Beech,	Richard Whitpaine,
Arthur Cooke,	Thomas Rudyard,	William Gibson,
William Welsh,	Ellis Hookes,	Walter Miers.
Gilbert Latie,	Abraham Shapton,	

EPISTLE II—1676.

Then agreed and concluded, that a general collection be made in the counties throughout England and Wales, and the city of London, for the service of truth beyond sea, and other public charges relating to the affairs of truth.

ON THE 18th DAY OF THE THIRD MONTH, THEN AGREED
AS FOLLOWETH; VIZ.

1. That Friends of the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings of each county be reminded to keep an exact account among themselves of those that first brought the message of glad tidings among them.

2. That their sufferings (to wit, of those first messengers) whether at steeple-houses, market-places, or otherwise, be also recorded.

3. What Friends first received them and their message.

4. To remember to keep a record of the names, and travels, and faithfulness, and unblameable conversations, of all the public labourers that are deceased.

5. What judgments fell upon persecutors.

6. Where any of the hearts of such enemies have been turned to God, let them and their conversations be recorded.

7. What priests and others have written books against Friends; and who have answered them.

8. Who have suffered the loss of goods, or imprisonment; with

the cause, time, and manner of such sufferings ; together with the names of their persecutors.

9. Who have died in prison on truth's account ; and for what branch of our testimony. And that tithes taken away by force may be recorded as a suffering for truth.

10. Where there hath been any signal living testimony of dying Friends to record them.

11. That the names of them that have been instruments in such persecutions and sufferings, with the names of sufficient witnesses, whether Friends or neighbours, &c. be exactly recorded, to manifest both the fact and the inflictors.

12. If any have apostatized, that their sufferings, whilst owning the truth, be notwithstanding recorded, and their apostasies signified.

13. Where any backsliders or apostates have returned, and any judgments overtaken such in their gainsaying let it be recorded.

These things are mentioned to put Friends in mind to keep them, and such matters, on record, in their respective counties and meetings as aforesaid, to have recourse to the records thereof for the service of truth ; and to send copies thereof to London, as there shall be occasion to call for them ; still remembering the former direction, to begin where you left the last returns ; and so for the future observe that method, that the same sufferings may not be sent twice over, nor confusedly.

It is also our advice to Friends, as that which hath been and may be serviceable, that in the respective counties they apply themselves to some of the most moderate swaying or considerable men in authority, as they shall have occasion, for the quieting or hindering of inferior officers that prosecute and persecute Friends. And that likewise, where any such considerable men of interest or power in any county do reside at court or the city of London, that Friends in the country may acquaint some Friends of London of such, and their names, and where to find them, that they may apply themselves to them on extraordinary occasions, or deep sufferings, on the behalf of Friends who are or may be oppressed and suffer in the country by malicious men ; in order to stop them if possible.

Also it is advised, that all Friends have a care that they neither openly nor secretly consent to the taking away of their tithes, nor to the payment of them by any one whatsoever on their behalf ; but keep faithful to their testimony.

That Friends be careful not to use any indirect ways to free themselves ; as by Habeas Corpus, upon a pretended debt. or the like. Yet not to deny removing to London by Habeas Cor-

pus, to reverse an unjust judgment, passed either at the assizes or sessions; provided that they look to their testimony, and eye their freedom in the Lord's power. And none to wrong truth's testimony, through seeking of ease to the flesh.

That Friends be careful of entangling themselves in the law, because of some small irregularities in proceeding. But if the law be materially transgressed, and the severity of it exceeded by our persecutors, that Friends in God's wisdom use their liberty, upon serious and good advice amongst themselves, so as the truth and its testimony may be kept clear over all.

Signified in the name, and on the behalf, of the said Yearly Meeting.

Thomas Taylor,	Thomas Langhorne,	John Boulren,
Ambrose Rigg,	John Burnyeat,	Charles Marshall,
Jasper Batt,	George Whitehead,	Stephen Smith,
John Blakeling,	Thomas Salthouse,	Leonard Fell,
William Penn,	John Tiffen,	Ellis Hookes.

EPISTLE III—1677.

1. Then agreed, that the Yearly Meeting of one or two from each county (as formerly agreed upon at a General Meeting in London, upon the 29th of the Third Month 1672, appointed yearly to meet about the public affairs of Friends some time in the week called Whitsun Week, until further order; and afterwards agreed to be discontinued from the 21st day of the Third Month, 1673 till Friends in God's wisdom should see a farther occasion for it) be again revived, and begin this time twelve month; and then Friends to advise about the continuance thereof, as they in God's counsel shall see occasion. And accordingly this meeting offers it as their advice to the Quarterly Meetings in the respective counties throughout England and Wales, according to the former agreement of the said General Meeting, held as aforesaid the 29th of the Third Month 1672 which was for a General Meeting of Friends to be held at London once a year, in the week called Whitsun Week; to consist of six Friends for the city of London; three for the city of Bristol; two for the town of Colchester; and one or two from each and every of the counties of England and Wales respectively; and that the preceding Quarterly Meetings take care to nominate and appoint the Friends to

be present at the General Meeting aforesaid: and that the Friends so chosen be desired to be at London by the Second-day at night, at farthest, in the Whitsun Week so called; and that a competent number of country Friends meet with the six Friends of the city, to appoint the time and place for the assembling of the said General Meeting, to be holden in the said week for the service of truth. And it is desired, that the Friends who shall come up out of the several counties, be such as understand the sufferings and affairs of their respective counties.

2. That Thomas Rudyard, Ellis Hookes, &c. take a list out of the Exchequer of persons convicted upon the statute against recusants; in order to find out the names of Friends thereon, for application to be made to some in power on their behalf. That the Friends of each county bear the charge respectively, as Friends out of divers counties have undertaken for their respective counties. Which charge the Quarterly Meetings are desired to defray, as it comes before them respectively.

3. That it be recommended to Friends of each Quarterly Meeting to appoint a Friend or two, that is of capacity, in such cases to attend every assize and sessions in the respective counties, to take notice what persons are there presented, indicted, convicted, or otherwise proceeded against; and, as much as in Friends lies, to prevent any inconvenience or damage to Friends thereby. And in case any shall happen to be convicted, that Friends transmit a list of the names of such so convicted, to the Meeting for Sufferings at London.

4. The matter about dispersing a proportion of Friends' books to each county by this meeting: It is agreed, That it remain as it was formerly stated by the Friends appointed to take care in that case, until the General Meeting, when Friends come up out of each county: except any Quarterly Meeting shall in the mean time write to the Friends in London that were appointed, and desire to be eased in that matter; which they may do as they find cause.

Signed on the behalf of the said Meeting, by
ELLIS HOOKES.

EPISTLE IV—1681.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We dearly salute you in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our prince of peace, our head, our life, and lawgiver; being truly comforted and refreshed in his continued presence and blessing

with us, and with our meetings and christian care in the affairs and concerns of truth and churches of Christ; truly rejoicing in the living sense and accounts we have at this meeting of truth's prosperity and of the love, peace, and good order, and godly care among Friends and Brethren in most counties throughout England and Wales, and also in other nations and foreign parts. Blessed be our God for ever! In whose continued love, and on the behalf of this our Yearly Meeting, and as the sense and agreement thereof, these following particulars are recommended unto you.

AT A GENERAL MEETING HELD AT DEVONSHIRE-HOUSE,
LONDON, THE 24th DAY OF THE THIRD MONTH, 1681.

1. It is the advice and desire of this meeting, That the Quarterly Meetings in each county appoint one, two, or more Friends to attend at every assizes and quarter sessions in their respective counties, there to make inquiry of the clerks of the assizes and quarter sessions, what Friends are there presented or prosecuted for recusancy, and such like; and to take copies of all such presentments, prosecutions, and convictions as they find against any Friends; that they may thereby be the better able to take off, prevent, or avoid such prosecutions, as the truth may permit and direct.

2. It is also desired, That when Friends send up their cases of sufferings in general, or any particular case, in order to have Friends here in London to endeavour any redress thereupon, by application to the king, parliament, or other magistrates, that the same be written down (as well with respect to the loss sustained, goods distrained, severe or illegal treatment or usage by justices, or other persons) plain, pertinent, and distinct, as to matter of fact only; without any reflection upon the magistrates or persons by whom Friends have suffered, or against whom any complaint is made. And that such sufferings as are returned to be recorded here, be first perused by the Quarterly Meeting, or such persons as they shall appoint; and the same to be signed by the said persons so appointed.

3. That an account be yearly sent up, of all such Friends as are in prison, or prisoners; that we may know who are detained prisoners, and who are discharged since the Yearly Meeting before; and when discharged: also to signify the time of their commitment, by whom prosecuted, and for what cause.

4. That always care be taken to bring distinct accounts of all such Friends as have died in prison, or prisoners, for their testimony to the truth, since the foregoing Yearly Meeting; with their names, age, dwelling-place, education, callings, time of

convincement, and the places of their service and travel, and time of sufferings and death. It is also desired, that where any accounts of such Friends are already sent up, what are wanting in any of these particulars, care may be taken that they may be completed accordingly.

5. It is again the desire of this meeting, that every Quarterly Meeting enter this, and all such other papers and epistles as they may have had from the Yearly Meetings, in their book, to be read every Quarterly Meeting; that Friends be reminded of the services therein desired.

6. Agreed, That there be the like General Yearly Meeting this time twelve months, as the Lord gives liberty: and that in each county Friends be reminded to send up persons from their respective counties to the next Yearly Meeting.

Finally, dear Friends and Brethren, we commit you to the Lord God, to be ordered by his divine wisdom and counsel; and therein continue your love and tender care one for another, and for truth's prosperity. All dwell in the love of God, in unity and peace in Christ Jesus, the prince and life of peace; and therein go on in his service, and keep your habitations over all that which is contrary, or would hinder you therein, or disturb your peaceable societies.

So the God of peace be with you, bless and prosper you, in his love, heavenly union, and peace in Christ Jesus. Farewell.

Signed on the behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

ELLIS HOOKES.

EPISTLE V—1682.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in the Lord; and recommend unto your godly care and discretion these following particulars, to make use of and practise, as in the counsel of the Lord you see cause; being agreed on and advised in this our Yearly Meeting, for your help and service of one another in true and brotherly love, whereunto ye are called.

AT A YEARLY MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS, BEGUN AND HELD
IN LONDON, THE 5th OF THE FOURTH MONTH, 1682.

It is the agreement and advice of this meeting, That Friends take care, in all counties and places where they suffer by distress of their goods, or imprisonment of their persons, whether by war-

rant from the justices of peace, by indictments at the assizes or sessions, or process sent down to the sheriff's office, that they procure and send up with their sufferings exact copies of all warrants for distress, and such like; which they may generally procure from the constables, tything-men, or headboroughs; and the copies of all mittimusses granted or made by justices of the peace; which they may have from the goaler, and which the goaler is bound to deliver by law, on demand, to the prisoner, according to the late Habeas Corpus Act, 31 Car. II. entitled, "An Act for the better securing the Liberty of the Subject:*" and likewise to procure copies at large of all indictments at assizes or sessions; which they may have from the clerks of the peace and clerks of the assize: and copies of all writs and process issuing out of any of the courts at Westminster, which are directed to the sheriffs; which they may have from the under-sheriff's office: which may not only demonstrate their sufferings more exactly, but be a better mean and proof here to endeavour for their redress.

It is also advised and agreed, That what was the last Yearly Meeting agreed on, relating to the account and testimonies of the first spreaders of truth who are deceased, be again recommended to the respective Quarterly Meetings to make inquiry into, and send them up to London.

AT THE SAID MEETING, THE 6th OF THE FOURTH MONTH, 1682.

Upon consideration of the general suffering of Friends in many counties; it is the desire and advice of this meeting, That in such counties where there are severe and immediate sufferings, they, out of their respective Monthly Meetings, appoint some honest and knowing Friends to be as a Meeting for Sufferings for that county, who may take care, with all possible exactness, to state and draw up the cases of sufferings: that they lay the same before the respective justices (which is also as the statute plainly directs†) and magistrates of their own counties, for redress; and before the judges of assize, and bishops, where concerned against Friends; and that such accounts as they send up to the Meeting for Sufferings here, may be the same as they give to their own magistrates, duly stated, and well witnessed: and where necessity requires that accounts of sufferings be sent up with such speed that they cannot stay to a Monthly or Quarterly Meeting, that such accounts be viewed and approved under the hands of three

* Also the sheriff, goaler, &c. shall permit and suffer the prisoners to send out for beer, victuals, and other necessaries, where they please; as is required by a penal statute, 22 & 23 Car. II. cap. 20. §. 10. 13.
 "For the Relief of distressed Prisoners," † 4 Hen. VII. cap. 12.

or four Friends at least, to prevent mistakes, and loose uncertain accounts of things complained of: and that before any accounts be entered in the Quarterly Meeting books, the same be plainly and orderly drawn up by some knowing Friends in such concerns.

And it is further agreed, That when accounts of sufferings are sent up to London by Friends, they also send up accounts that they have laid the case before the justices and magistrates, for redress, who have not relieved them: and that the Friends coming up from the several counties to the Yearly Meeting bring up the account of their sufferings from their respective Quarterly Meetings, not in loose papers, but fairly entered in a book, under distinct heads and causes. And further, that in their own Quarterly Meeting books they enter, and send up here also, true accounts of the release or relief of Friends by name, by justices, magistrates, or others; and by what means, and by whom, and the time when also, released or relieved.

And it is further agreed and advised by this meeting, That all judgments of God upon persecutors, informers, and others (not only what has of late years befallen them, but from the first breaking-forth of truth,) be drawn up in writing, and entered in every Monthly Meeting book where it came to pass, exactly in all circumstances of time and place, and attested under the hands of witnesses: that thence it be sent and entered in their Quarterly Meeting books, and thence transmitted yearly to this General Meeting, in order to be here recorded and published in print, or laid before authority, as a service may be seen to be therein.

Upon consideration of the general suffering of Friends for recusancy, by prosecution for twenty pounds a month, on the statute 23 Eliz. and seizure of two-thirds of estates, it is again the advice of this Meeting unto all Friends, in the respective counties of England and Wales,

First, That some Friend attend every assizes and sessions; and inquire whether any Friends are presented by the constable, church-wardens, &c.

Secondly, If any, or who, are indicted thereon? That if they have any acquaintance or interest with the grand jury or justices they improve the same, to prevent the grand jury's presentment.

Thirdly, That they have the printed sheet of the case of recusancy sent down, that was presented to the parliament, and all Monthly Meetings furnished therewith; and to deliver them to the grand jury and moderate justices, at or before the assizes and sessions, to inform their judgments in that case, that these laws, by which we are prosecuted, were intentionally made against papists, and not against protestants.

Fourthly, That if any writs of seizures be issued out against

them, Friends attend the same. If they have any mortgage or incumbrance on their estates, that they plead the same to the jury of inquiry, to prevent such seizure.

Fifthly, But where such seizure cannot be prevented, then Friends to use their interest with the jury not to over-rate their lands.

Sixthly, That persons under such prosecution endeavour, before conviction and distresses taken, to clear their accounts ; and secure, or satisfy for, their debts which they owe to all persons : and suffer for their testimony with no other estate but their own.

Upon discourse of the case of Friends' sufferings on prosecution in the exchequer for tithes : and, consideration as to appearance and not-appearance, and answering and not-answering, to process and bills exhibited against them, Friends are left to their liberty and freedom in the truth, in their respective cases. And also, that, as Friends have freedom, and will tender or give in their answers in person, without oath, to the barons of the exchequer, Friends have unity therewith ; believing it may be of good service and a testimony for the truth against swearing, and against the severity of the court's prosecution of Friends to contempts, rebellion, and sequestration, upon their not accepting their answer without oath.

AT THE SAID MEETING, THE 7th OF THE FOURTH MONTH 1682.

Upon consideration of Friends' books, and the disposing thereof for the general service of truth, it is agreed and desired, That every Quarterly Meeting in each county take care weightily to consider and advise amongst themselves such way, method, place and places, as fit to sell, publish, and dispose of books given forth for the service of truth ; and the numbers they would receive ; and give advice thereof to their respective correspondents here for the Meeting for Sufferings in London, to whose care and ordering these concerns are referred.

AT THE SAID MEETING, THE 8th OF THE FOURTH MONTH, 1682.

Upon consideration of sufferings in general, it is the advice of this meeting, That in cases, of difficulty, and where Friends who are sufferers, stand in need of advice in any particular case, they send up their respective cases to the Meeting for Sufferings in London. And it is also left to the freedom of Friends of the Quarterly Meeting, for their better and more easy understanding when they are prosecuted, and suffer in person and estate, contrary to law, to buy or provide the " Statute-Book at large ;" to which on all occasions, they may have recourse, and thereby may

in many cases be made capable to know when and how they are injured, and to whom to apply for redress.

It being queried, "Whether any person can be prosecuted in the ecclesiastical court, and there censured : and indicted and prosecuted at common law, or the temporal court, for one and the same offence?" Upon consideration thereof, it is apprehended by several, that in case it be such offence against any statute, where the statute ascertaining the punishment makes provision that the offence, punished by virtue of that statute, shall not be otherwise punished (as in the statute of 1 Eliz. chap. 2. §. 24. and that against conventicles, 22 Car. II chap. 1. §. 14,) in such cases of offence they cannot for one and the same offence be censured in the ecclesiastical court, and prosecuted in the temporal court. But in case they be, the remedy may be thus ; viz. "If prosecuted first in the ecclesiastical court, and after in the temporal court, he may plead the former prosecution to the latter. If prosecuted first in the temporal court, and after in the ecclesiastical, he may plead also the former procedure to the latter. If the ecclesiastical court accept not of such plea in bar, and stay not procedure thereon, the person may, in any of the courts at Westminster, suggest the whole matter, and have a prohibition thereon to stay the procedure in the ecclesiastical court"; as it is the judgment of some knowing in those matters.

A case being here proposed about public meeting-houses, and what the sense of Friends is shall be done by those in whose name or names such house is purchased ; it is agreed, and is the sense of this meeting, that such as have given up their names, and undertaken the trust of any public meeting-place, do own and stand by the same in time of trial and persecution ; lest they give opportunity and occasion for our adversaries to seize our meeting-houses : as some have been done to, for want of one to own the houses. And further ; if any persons, having such trust at this day, have not strength to stand by their trust, and therefore are willing and desirous to give it up, that they surrender the same. And that such as will take up these trusts be good and upright Friends, who take them up in faith, and will acknowledge themselves to be owners of such houses in time of trial or necessity, or prosecution by the act against conventicles, or otherwise.

A proposition being made to this meeting on prosecution for 20 pounds a month, by informers on *Q^{ui tam}* writs at common law ;* it was queried, "Whether it was adviseable to appear, or not appear to such suit; but go to prison upon the first writ for not appearing?" Upon consideration of some knowing in this case ;

* 23 Eliz. cap. 1. 35 Eliz. cap. 1. §. 10.

1. That any Friend, appearing when first arrested, may, at small cost of the informer, be prosecuted to a judgment and execution :

2. That not appearing, the prosecutor cannot proceed upon his suit to any declaration, nor to judgment or execution, until the person arrested, at the informer's cost, be brought to the bar of one of the courts at Westminster ;

3. This cost being five or ten pounds, or sometimes more, to bring the person from the country goal to Westminster-hall ; which an informer seldom can or will lay out ;

4. Such appearance being in general not only to ease the prosecutor in his charge in prosecution, but also a forwarding him in his suit ; it is plain (in the sense of divers,) that not appearing is the greatest disappointment to the informer.

Howbeit, it is the sense of this meeting, that Friends be left to the guidance of the power of God in themselves, and as they have freedom therein.

It is desired and advised by this meeting, that it be recommended to the several Quarterly Meetings to send up one or two faithful Friends, who are knowing in the affairs of the church, and the state of Friends there, to attend the next General Yearly Meeting, if the Lord give liberty, and make way for the same.

AT THE SAID MEETING, THE 9th OF THE FOURTH MONTH, 1682.

These questions following were proposed to the Friends who appeared for the respective Quarterly Meetings, to give answers to :

First, What Friends in the ministry, in their respective counties departed this life since last Yearly Meeting ?

Secondly, What Friends imprisoned for their testimony have died in prison since the last Yearly Meeting ?

Thirdly, How the truth has prospered amongst them since the last Yearly Meeting ? And how Friends are in peace and unity.

To which the Friends of the counties gave their respective answers to the Meeting's satisfaction and comfort, in relation to the truth's prosperity, and peace and unity among Friends.

Finally, dear Friends, we have great cause to magnify the name of the Lord our God, for this blessed opportunity, and affording us his wonted presence, and peculiar providence in our preservation, beyond the expectations of many : being greatly comforted and refreshed in the many good accounts and lively testimonies given by the Friends out of their respective counties of England and Wales, and also out of Ireland, Scotland, Holland, and Germany, of the general prosperity and spreading of truth, and of the love, peace, and unity among Friends ; as also of a

new meeting, even among the captives in Algiers, where one Friend has a public testimony among them; and intimation given by letters out of America, that things are generally well with Friends in those parts. All which being considered, we have great cause to prize the Lord's power and goodness, and to pray for the continuance of his love, and increase of his wisdom, government, and peace among you, of which there shall be no end.

Signed on the behalf of the said meeting, by

RICHARD RICHARDSON.

By whom also printed (with the advice of some Friends,) for expedition hence to the Quarterly Meetings, and thence also only to the Monthly Meetings; by them only to be communicated, as they shall see a service.

EPISTLE VI—1683.

Dear Friends and brethren,

Whom the Lord Jesus Christ hath quickened and made alive, that you might serve the living God in his new and living way, and worship him in his spirit and truth :

Now, dear Friends, all keep in the unity of God's holy spirit, which is in the bond of peace. And in the same spirit of God, be all of one mind, and one judgment. And in the same spirit feel the love of God shed in your hearts, which bears and endures all things : which love, nothing below is able to separate you from. And in this love of God, the body of Christ (which he is the head of) is edified.

And now, dear Friends, the wonderful mercy, and goodness, and power, and blessed presence of the Eternal Immortal God, hath been manifest this year in all our meetings, and Friends wonderfully preserved by his special divine providence in this difficult and suffering time. The Lord our God is worthy to have all the praise, glory and honour ; for his presence and power was manifest beyond words ! Blessed be his name forever. And therefore that all may walk worthy of his blessings and mercies ! And that all may keep and walk in Christ Jesus, the sanctuary ! For in him is peace and safety ; who destroys the destroyer, the enmity, and adversary. For Christ is your sanctuary in this day of storm and tempest ; in whom you have rest and peace. And therefore, whatever storms and tempests do or should arise within or without, Christ your sanctuary is over

them all: who has all power in heaven and earth given unto him; and none is able to pluck his lambs and sheep out of his Father's or his hand, who is the true shepherd: neither are any able to hurt the hair of your head, except it be permitted by his power, for your trial. And therefore rejoice in his power; the Lamb of God; who hath the victory over all, both within and without. He by whom all things were made, and is over all; the First and the Last; the Amen; and the faithful and true witness in all his, males and females; the heavenly rock and foundation for all the believers in the light and all the children of the day to build upon, to stand sure.

And we do understand that in several counties are many in prison; and several under great sufferings, by spoil made on their goods; but the Lord doth greatly support them by his eternal arm of power.

And we are glad to hear in several counties that they have set up a meeting to look into sufferings; by which they may collect them all true, and so to lay them before the justices of sessions and judges of assizes, according to former advice.

And seeing the Lord's power hath supported faithful Friends in all their sufferings, we again remind you, that your sufferings from time to time be carefully collected, and truly stated; meet also to be laid before the supreme authority, and published in print, as there shall be occasion. Inasmuch as the frequent printing of the most grievous sufferings hath been divers times proposed, there is a necessity of the greater care and exactness in this case.

And it was matter of comfort and refreshment to us, to hear the testimonies of Friends of the general prosperity of truth, and unity and peace among Friends in the most counties in England and Wales. Divers tender epistles from Friends in prison were read; and this meeting was sensible of the Lord's power and tender care in supporting of them in their sufferings and deep trials. And also an epistle from Friends of the Quarterly Meeting at Amsterdam was read; intimating their christian care, love, and unity, and the prosperity of truth both in Holland and Germany.

The accounts relating to the redemption of captives, and Friends in sufferings, &c. were inspected; and all things found very plain and clear to satisfaction, and no need of a further supply at present.

And where in any county any Friends have had advantage, by entering appeals against informers, &c. that they keep a record thereof, attested by the clerk of the peace, or some other person

of note: and that they send a true copy thereof to the Meeting for Sufferings here.

Here were some tender Friends from Dantzick, Frizeland, Holland, Norway, Scotland, Ireland, and from America. And we understand that Friends keep up their meeting in Algiers in Turkey. And some Friends are going to the Yearly Meeting in Holland. And there is another Yearly Meeting settled at Dantzick; by which we understand that they are in unity, and the Lord's blessed presence is among them, and his truth spreads and prospers.

So with our dear loves, and salutation in our Lord Jesus Christ (who is our and your life) unto all the faithful every where, we rest, your dear Friends and brethren.

Signed on the behalf of the said Meeting, by

RICHARD RICHARDSON.

EPISTLE VII—1684.

Dear and Faithful Friends,

After the salutation of our tender and constant love in our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our life and salvation, these things following are recommended to you and your christian care from our said meeting.

Dear Friends,

We being sensible of the great sufferings and heavy pressures which Friends in many parts of this land have long lain under, and are still continued upon them, and in some parts increased; great industry and endeavours have been from time to time used, and many applications made for relief. And of late some Friends of London meeting with some stop in making application for suffering Friends throughout the nation; and being advised by authority, that it would be more proper for the sufferers themselves to make their complaints, &c. on this consideration it is thought most proper and convenient, that all particular accounts of any great or extreme sufferings, which require speedy applications or complaint to the king, &c. after carefully drawn up, and signed by the respective sufferers, and the truth thereof (if possible) certified by some other faithful Friends, of the same county or neighbourhood, known here; that then they be brought up by one or two understanding sound Friends, that may be capable to present the said sufferings and grievances, as aforesaid, if need require; having knowledge of the particular cases thereof, that they may

be the better able to give account of the most material circumstances: Friends here of our Meeting for Sufferings being willing to assist them in all extreme cases.

It is also desired, that all accounts of sufferings which require application either to the king or council, or particular ministers or persons of quality here, may be true, and signed before sent up, and recommended as aforesaid; and that none be sent up unsigned.

A general application to the king, in behalf of suffering Friends throughout the nation (comprehending their cases on which their sufferings depend,) was offered and proposed to this meeting for Friends' concurrence to be presented, if they see meet to follow it with particular complaints and applications, either now, or hereafter: which being approved, it was left to Friends to consider of till the next day, with desires then to know their minds concerning the same. Which being again made mention of the next day, and Friends not being ready at present to follow it with fresh complaints, it was advised that they might report the same to their respective Quarterly Meetings for Sufferings in the counties; that, as you see cause, upon any extreme or severe suffering, you may prepare account thereof, to be presented as before directed.

Two letters sent from Friends of Dantzick, dated the 20th of the Second Month, 1684, were read; signifying their strait confinement; being prisoners in the house of correction there, under extreme hard usage and cruelty; forced to lie upon straw, in this late extreme sharp winter. They have been shackled or chained together, two and two, by their hands; and by the magistrates (the senate of that place) sentenced to be kept and fed with bread and water only for their sustenance. Also, an epistle from the Quarterly Meeting at Amsterdam, dated the 3d of the Second Month, 1684, was read; recommending the distressed case of the said prisoners at Dantzick to this our meeting. And Friends of Holland having done much for them, &c. in their suffering necessities, manifold imprisonments, and banishments, this meeting could do no less than concur with said Friends of Holland; and in christian bowels and tenderness, order something towards the relief of the said suffering Friends in Dantzick, as formerly, to be sent by Friends of Holland. And we were moved, in the love of God, by epistles to encourage and strengthen these our extreme suffering brethren in their christian and faithful testimony.

An account being given by a meeting here, ordered to inspect the accounts of Friends that are captives in Algiers, &c. intimat-

ing that what was charitably contributed formerly towards their redemption, and left for that service, is in a great part expended for the redemption of many, and the rest thereof is well nigh engaged for the redemption of several Friends more that have long remained captives; some whereof have been under extreme hardships, as violent beating, and other cruelties, by their patronesses.

These things tenderly considered, a collection for their redemption was proposed, and unanimously agreed upon by this meeting, that the same should be, and is hereby, tenderly recommended to the Quarterly Meetings of Friends in their respective counties throughout England and Wales: and that the same likewise be, and is hereby, recommended to Friends in Ireland, Scotland, Barbadoes, and Jamaica, to afford their christian and friendly assistance in contributing to the same service. And what shall be contributed for this service, to be returned to William Shewen, John Dew, William Chandler, Charles Bathurst, Theodore Ecclestone, and John Edge, or any of them, in London.

And although, dear Friends, we are not insensible that many families of faithful Friends in this nation are greatly oppressed, and exposed to suffering and spoil at this time for truth's holy testimony, and the name of Jesus, and thereby disabled to help others in distress; yet considering that the suffering at present falls not so heavy upon many others, whom the Lord has replenished with outward substance, which he has made them stewards of; we hope the Lord will open their hearts to consider the calamities and extremity of the said captives and sufferers.

Mention being made by some Friends, before they went hence, of the want of the printers sending books into their country as formerly; and we understanding that there is the like omission in some other counties; we recommend and leave it to Friends in their respective Quarterly and Monthly Meetings to consider of, and to order and settle that business in their own respective counties: and to correspond with the printers here for books of truth, and take care for the spreading of serviceable books and papers, as heretofore, in truth's service, that there be no further neglect in that case.

Many serious and living accounts and testimonies were given by Friends from their respective counties, of the prosperity of the work of the Lord, the spreading of truth, and of the love, unity and peace that is generally among Friends, and the increase thereof in several counties, and the sense of the presence of the Lord God among all faithful Friends; though in some places much suffering and persecution, yet in other places more

free, and meetings quiet. And though the enemy has entered and doth work in some places to make rents and divisions, yet the strength of that spirit is much weakened, and its work of opposition against the power of God, and unity of his people, much withered and blasted: and many, that were for a time hurt and captivated thereby, are restored, and come back to their first love and unity with faithful Friends; and a great love is raised in many that stood at a distance. Although others, who have wilfully persisted in their opposition against the counsel of truth and faithful Friends, are scattered, and gone back again into the world, and the loose and corrupt ways thereof; and some even to the worships that are therein. And still, where the enemy yet works to trouble Friends, they who live in the faith that gives the victory, do hope to see things better shortly.

Account is also given, by letters from Ireland, Scotland, Barbadoes, Bermudas, Carolina, New England, Jamaica, and other plantations in America, that things are pretty well there, and truth spreads and increases; and that Friends generally are in love and unity.

Lastly, it was unanimously agreed, that the Yearly Meeting for Sufferings should continue, as the Lord makes way for Friends concerned to have recourse thereto. Only on tender consideration of the present difficulties and straights, and the great care upon Friends here, with respect to country Friends, to preserve their liberties as much as in us lay (which beyond expectation was answered, through the goodness and providence of God, as many were sensible;) on these considerations it was proposed and thought meet, that if sufferings do continue till the next year, one Friend only of each county may be sufficient to come up to this meeting at the usual time; the same Friend being one that is approved and entrusted by the Quarterly Meeting, as capable to give account of Friends' sufferings, and the affairs of truth in that county, and to make application to authority here, as before directed, if need shall require.

So committing you to the divine power and wisdom of the Lord our God, for your safety and peace; and thereby to be ordered in these and all other affairs of the blessed truth, and the concerns of the church of Christ; with our supplication and prayers to Almighty God, that Zion may be filled with judgment, righteousness, and peace; that it may appear more and more, that the Lord who dwelleth on high, is exalted over all in his church and people, we remain your faithful Friends and brethren of the aforesaid meeting.

Signed by

RICHARD RICHARDSON.

EPISTLE VIII—1685.

Salutation in Christ Jesus, with endeared and tender love in the blessed communion of his Holy Spirit and unchangeable light and life, to all faithful Friends and brethren, both in present sufferings and out of sufferings; praying to God the Father, that grace, mercy, and peace may be daily increased in and among you, through the lively operation of the same Holy Spirit; and that effectual deliverance for his afflicted remnant he may in due time bring to pass, to his own glory, and his people's comfort and joy.

Dear Friends and brethren,

The brethren intrusted by this meeting do recommend unto you the following account; viz.

1. That the Lord hath, according to his wonted goodness, accompanied this meeting with his living refreshing presence and divine counsel; and by his power hath eminently preserved and kept us; and given Friends this blessed opportunity in peace and quietness, to open their hearts one unto another, in the universal love of God, concerning the weighty affairs of the blessed truth and churches of Christ, and the present state thereof, to their general and great satisfaction and comfort in the Lord.

2. And, to our great satisfaction, accounts were livingly and weightily given by Friends of the several counties, of their present states and conditions, relating to the faith and patience of Friends in sufferings, and the Lord supporting them in their faithful testimony for his name and truth's sake; as also of the general love, concord, peace, good order, and christian care among them; and the dominion the Lord hath given them over the spirit of opposition and division where it hath appeared; and how he hath borne them up in their manifold tribulations.

3. And that though in some counties the sufferings continue great and heavy upon many Friends, both in their persons and estates; yet in some other counties the sufferings are of late abated. Blessed be the Lord.

4. Also divers seasonable and lively accounts, by epistles, were given from foreign parts; as from Ireland, Holland, Barbadoes, Pennsylvania, &c. of the love, unity, and peace among Friends, and truth's prosperity in those parts: particularly that from Holland, signifying, that Friends at Dantzick, and in other eastern parts beyond the Seven Provinces, are at present in the enjoyment of more quietness and liberty than formerly. The Lord has been pleased to influence the king of Poland, and the magistrates of Dantzick, moderately to resent the applications made to them in behalf of the said suffering Friends and bre-

thren; although most of them, by means of their former great sufferings, were reduced to so low a condition in the world, that they are not yet able to support themselves and families, without assistance from Friends at Amsterdam; upon whom the burden having long lain, Friends of this meeting agreed to communicate something of their christian charity towards the assisting and encouraging them in the said good work.

5. And concerning our Friends that were captives in Algiers, the care and diligence of Friends here, intrusted in that affair, hath been such, that several Friends have been redeemed, and come safe home, since the last Yearly Meeting; and have very honestly, tenderly, and thankfully acknowledged Friends' care and kindness towards them. And as to those that yet remain captives, Friends are taking the same care for their redemption also; which it is hoped will shortly be accomplished. And Friends here being sensible how the Lord hath supported them in their faithful testimony for his name, and under their deep afflictions that they have suffered in that dark place of captivity in Algiers, are greatly comforted and satisfied in their christian care and charity on their behalf.

6. That the Friends of this meeting, to whom the inspection of accounts was referred, do make their report, That having perused the books, and those accounts relating to Friends suffering, and their relief, they find them very clear and plain, and no occasion for a further contribution this year: Friends of most counties in this nation having been very free and cheerful in their charitable contribution towards the redemption of Friends in captivity: as also Friends in Ireland, Barbadoes, and Jamaica, to their great commendation, have manifested their readiness and christian assistance in the same good work; thereby shewing their tender and charitable sympathizing with their Friends and brethren in sufferings; and shall not in anywise lose their reward from the Lord.

7. And we also give you notice, that the London Friends intrusted this year with the affairs of the captives and suffering Friends, in disposal of Friends' charity for their relief, (as according to former appointment they shall be directed) are Charles Bathurst, Theodore Ecclestone, Francis Camfield, Philip Ford, and John Staplo: to whom, or any of them, as occasion requires in those concerns, you may apply for advice.

And lastly, we remind you, according to former and frequent advice, that you keep exact and distinct accounts of your sufferings on record, to have in readiness on all occasions; and to bring up yearly a true copy, or sufficient summary abreviation thereof. And at the conclusion of every yearly account for each county respectively, be sure to insert the whole number of pri-

soners imprisoned that year, and of prisoners that died the same year, and of those remaining in prison : as also the value of distresses and goods levied the same year distinctly ; viz. 1. On the conventicle act. 2. For twenty pounds a month. 3. On *Qui tam* writs. 4. Twelve pence a Sunday. 5. For tithes. With all other sufferings for truth ; and thereto add the total sum ; to the end that they may be presented to the king, &c. for relief.

And it was desired, that the Yearly Meeting for Sufferings might continue as last year directed, for one faithful Friend of each county, who knows the sufferings thereof, to have recourse thereunto, as the Lord shall make way.

To whose divine power and wisdom we recommend you, for safety, peace, and prosperity. And in the blessed unity of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, we remain your faithful Friends and Brethren, and servants in Christ Jesus.

Signed in behalf of the said Meeting, by

RICHARD RICHARDSON.

EPISTLE IX—1686.

Salutation in Christ Jesus, with endeared and tender love in the blessed communion of his Holy Spirit and unchangeable light and life, to all our faithful Friends and brethren, in and out of sufferings ; praying to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that from him grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied in and among you, with sincere love and brotherly affection, through the lively operation of the same Holy Spirit ; and that the effectual deliverance for his afflicted remnant, which he hath already begun to bring to pass, may in his own due time be perfected, to his own glory, and his people's refreshment, comfort, and joy.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We judged it convenient to recommend unto you this following account of such things as were necessary for you to understand.

1. To let you know the Lord hath wonderfully appeared for us and with us, in our several living and refreshing meetings, in which his divine presence hath made glad our souls, and hath given his people living openness in the blessed fellowship of the everlasting gospel ; and many blessed and heavenly testimonies were given to the same, to the refreshment of his heritage ; also signifying the love, concord and unity, and also the care and diligence, of Friends in their several countries, for the promoting and exalting the truth of God.

2. Also, divers good epistles were read from divers meetings on this side and beyond the seas, signifying the prosperous state of truth and Friends in several parts of the world.

3. To let you know, that the Friends desired to inspect the accounts of Friends' sufferings, and the charitable relief which some years since was cheerfully contributed to their assistance, do give an account that they find the books and the accounts thereof well and duly kept; and also that by reason of the great sufferings that have of late been upon Friends, which have occasioned great charges and expense, the said money is all laid out, and much more. And therefore it was unanimously agreed, that there be a free contribution recommended to all the meetings of our Friends and brethren in England and Wales, for the reimbursing Friends here, that have laid out much money for the service aforesaid; and also for the further relief of our poor Friends, that are or may hereafter be in sufferings for their faithful testimony to the truth; and that you make it known from your Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, to the Particular Meetings in each county; and recommend this good and christian work to their considerations, in the unity and sympathizing spirit of truth.

And whereas divers Friends and brethren do now, through the good hand of God, enjoy their liberty, and more freedom than formerly, we hope the Lord will open their hearts to extend their charitable help and assistance to their fellow members in Christ Jesus, who still remain in suffering for the testimony of a good and upright conscience towards God.

Also we let you know, that the Friends intrusted by this meeting this year, for the work and service aforesaid, are Francis Camfield, Philip Ford, John Staplo, George Barr, John Hall, and William Parker, to whom, or any of them, you may return the free contribution of Friends: and for the more ease to the six Friends aforesaid in this matter, some counties may return the monies, so collected, to William Mead, William Crouch, William Ingram, Benjamin Antrobus, George Watts, or John Edridge, or any of them, to be by them forthwith delivered to the Friends in trust, as aforesaid.

And as concerning Friends that were captives in Algiers, we let you know, they are all redeemed except one, whom we hope shortly will also be here. But several Friends are now captives in Sally; for whose redemption Friends are also taking care, and hope in time to effect it.

And it was desired, that you might be put in mind and advised as formerly, that you keep a distinct account of sufferings; that is to say, upon what statute, or by what ways or means, your

sufferings are brought upon you, and with the values demanded, and the values distrained, and by whom.

Also it was agreed, that the Yearly Meeting for Sufferings should continue as the Lord makes way for it; and that Friends in every county do desire a faithful Friend or two of their county, who understand the state of suffering Friends, and of the meetings in their counties, to attend that service the next year; by whom you are desired to send an account of how much money was collected in your respective counties for the work aforesaid, and to whom it was remitted.

And so we commend you all to the Lord, and to the word of his power, which is able to support you in all conditions.

Signed in behalf of the said Meeting, by

RICHARD RICHARDSON.

EPISTLE X—1687.

Dear and tender salutation in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our life, and in whom we have fellowship, to all our true Friends and brethren every where.

Having great cause to bless and praise Almighty God for his continued goodness and renewed favours unto us (a deep and weighty sense whereof lives upon our spirits, and hath been upon this meeting, to the opening and tendering the hearts of many in renewed love and thanksgiving to the God of our mercies and brotherly kindness and tender affection one towards another, and towards all the whole family and heritage of our God, who are truly made partakers of his goodness in the land of the living;) finding ourselves greatly engaged to return sincere and hearty thanksgiving to the Lord for the present enjoyment of peace and liberty openly to worship and serve him, and mutually to edify one another in the congregations of his people; we pray God, that by the operation of the same spirit of love and life, all Friends may be like-minded with us to improve so great and eminent a mercy, with tender, humble and thankful hearts; and that by the assistance of his grace they may walk worthy of the same, to his glory, and the renown of his name, who is worthy for ever and ever.

Dear and tenderly beloved Friends and brethren,

We hereby give you to understand, that at this our meeting we have received and read many good epistles and letters from our Friends and brethren of divers meetings and countries on this side and beyond the seas, giving us an account of the pros-

perity of truth, and the Lord's work, and Friends' love and unity therein, and of their peaceable meetings and increase; as from Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Holland, Nevis, Barbadoes, Maryland, Rhode-Island, West and East Jersey, and Pennsylvania; and were truly comforted to understand thereby the concord, unity, and godly care and zeal for the name of our Lord that lives and is continued amongst his people in the parts and places aforesaid.

Also we thought meet hereby to acquaint you, that all our Friends (except Roger Udy) that were late captives at Algiers, are redeemed and set at liberty, to their great relief, and comfort of them and their relations and distressed families; wherein Friends' care has greatly tended to the strength and establishment of the sufferers in the truth, engaging their hearts to return thanks to God, and tender acknowledgments to Friends, for their love and care concerning them. But as concerning the Friends who are captives at Mequinez (taken by the Sally-men) although a great concern and care hath been and is upon Friends here about them, and great endeavours used for their redemption, yet no way is found open at present for the accomplishment thereof: only Friends here have found out means to convey some relief to them in their necessities; which they are careful of.

The number of the captive Friends in Mequinez is now ten: that is to say, Joseph Wasey, John Bealing, and Joseph Harbin; who being taken and carried captives thither, found two English captives there, who were convinced of truth in their captivity, before the said three Friends came thither. And five more English captives are convinced since; and they live in great love and unity one with another. The said two Friends have wrote over to Friends here a large, tender, and sensible letter, testifying their fellowship and unity with Friends, and acknowledging their love and charity to them in their bonds and necessities. We understand that the people they suffer under are more barbarous than the Turks in Algiers. From whose great oppression and cruel hands we pray God in mercy deliver them, if it be his blessed will.

Also we let you know, that the Friends appointed to inspect the accounts relating to the late charitable relief sent up by Friends since the last year, do find all things well placed to the account, by the Friends therewith intrusted; and that the debt contracted the last year, in the cases of suffering Friends, is discharged; and there remains a sufficient supply at present for further service, if need requires: and the remainder of what was

charitably contributed for the relief of captives, doth remain in readiness for that purpose, so soon as it pleases God to make way for it.

Also we let you know, that the Friends of this city, intrusted by this meeting this year for the work and service aforesaid, are George Barr, John Hall, William Parker, John Edridge, Benjamin Antrobus, and Thomas Barker.

And seeing God hath been graciously pleased to incline the heart of the king to extend favour and kindness towards Friends and others, for their liberties from prison and spoil, and to grant and declare LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE for the free exercise of religion; it was, at the desire of many country Friends, and on serious consideration, concluded by this meeting, that a paper of christian and thankful acknowledgment should be prepared to be presented to the king, according as our Friends and brethren of the city of London had already done. Which accordingly was prepared and thrice read over deliberately to the meeting; whereunto the meeting unanimously agreed, being generally satisfied therewith: and some Friends of the country were desired to attend the king; who accordingly were willing to present the same.

And dear Friends; We do further in the love of God and his blessed truth, and testimony of Christ Jesus, recommend it to your tender and christian care, that Friends in the several counties do sincerely keep to their ancient and christian testimony against that old and great oppression of TITHES; for which many faithful Friends and servants of Christ have deeply suffered (some till death in goals) and several still suffer: whereby it appears, that the priests, as they were the first, so they are like to be the last persecutors for conscience sake. And also we request it of you, carefully to collect and make return of all Friends' sufferings for tithes (as well as other sufferings) whether by imprisonments, or by taking away goods (as corn, cattle, or other goods) either by or without law: both which are sufferings, and ought to be so accounted of, and entered upon record in behalf of all faithful Friends, who therein stand clear in their testimony for truth.

And dear Friends; As our Friends and brethren, who were intrusted to attend the service of this Yearly Meeting out of their several respective counties and cities, have given us very plain and lively accounts of the progress and prosperity of truth and the work of the Lord, and of the great love and unity among Friends, and the great openness of heart among many people in divers parts to receive the blessed truth (which we are truly comforted to hear of, and so well to understand;) so it is desired

that Friends in their respective counties, continue their care in regard to our next Yearly Meeting (intended, if the Lord will, to be kept as usually) that such faithful Friends (one or two of a county) be desired to attend it, as are most capable and fit for the service thereof.

So commending you all to the God of all our mercies, for your preservation, instruction, and comfort, and for the increase of love and unity among you, heartily desiring that all Friends may walk wisely and inoffensively in their lives and conversations, in the peaceable spirit and life of our Lord Jesus Christ, towards the civil government, and towards all men; and truly and thankfully to prize and improve this present great additional mercy and favour of the liberty we enjoy, with all other his tender mercies and favours we partake of, to his honour, and the benefit and comfort one of another.

Signed on the behalf of our said meeting, by

RICHARD RICHARDSON.

EPISTLE XI—1688.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in the dear and tender love of God, rejoicing in the communion and holy fellowship of the Spirit of life, by which we are quickened together in Christ Jesus, that we may walk together in him acceptably to God the Father; to whom be glory and praise, throughout all the churches of Christ every where, world without end. Amen.

Dear Friends,

We give you to understand, that according to the wonted kindness of our tender and merciful God, we have had a very living and refreshing assembling together, and the glory of the divine power and presence of God hath shined upon us from day to day, to our great consolation; and a sweet harmony, love and concord hath appeared amongst us; and many living testimonies were brought forth, through the springings of life in many, both in respect to the ancient universal doctrine of the light and grace of God, and also in particulars, relating to the holy and harmless conversation of those who have believed, exhorting all to walk as becomes the gospel of Christ, that the profession thereof may shine forth more and more, and the beauty of holiness may be seen upon you, and upon your families.

1. And in the first place we do earnestly desire you all, in your several Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, to stir up and exhor

Friends to diligence in their meetings on the week-days, as well as on the First-day ; and to wait upon the Lord for his divine wisdom and strength, to guide them and preserve them out of evil ; knowing assuredly that the diligent waiters upon the Lord shall be filled with good things ; though the careless and lukewarm remain in weakness, and are often overcome by the enemy.

2. And also that Friends every where be put in mind to keep under the leadings and guidance of the spirit of truth in their outward habits, and fashions thereof ; not suffering the spirit of the world to get over them, in a lust to be like unto them in things useless and superfluous ; lest it prevail upon them (by giving a little way to it) till it leads them from the simplicity and plainness that become the gospel ; and so from one vain liberty to another, till they come to lose the blessed liberty that is in Christ, into which they were in measure redeemed, and fall back into the bondage of the world's spirit, and grow up into the liberty of the flesh, with the lust and concupiscence thereof, and so lose both their name and place in the truth, as too many have done.

3. And for the prevention of these things, we do intreat and desire all you our dear Friends, brethren, and sisters, that are parents and governors of families, that ye diligently lay to heart your work and calling in your generation for the Lord, and the charge committed to you ; not only in becoming good examples unto the younger sort, but also to use your power in your own families, in the educating your children and servants in modesty, sobriety, and in the fear of God, curbing the extravagant humour in the young ones, when it doth appear, and not to indulge it, and allow of it. For you are set in your families as judges for God, and it is you that must give an account of the power committed to you. And when you see a libertine wanton spirit appear in your children or servants, that lusteth after the vain customs and fashions of the world, either in dressings, habits, or outward adornings, and craves your assistance and allowance, without which it cannot get forward, while they are under your government ; O then look to yourselves, and discharge your trust for God, and for the good of their souls, exhorting in meekness, and commanding in wisdom ; that so you may minister and reach to the witness, and help them over their temptations, in the authority of God's power. And when they feel themselves helped and delivered, their souls will bless God for you, and you will reap the comfort of your labour.

4. And dear Friends, as it hath pleased God to bring forth a day of liberty and freedom to serve him, in which he hath stopt the mouths of the devourers, in a great measure, for his name's sake ; O therefore let every one have a care so to use this liberty,

as the name of God may be honoured by it; and not an occasion taken by any, because of the present freedom, to launch forth into trading and worldly business beyond what they can manage honourably, and with reputation, among the sons of men, and so that they may keep their word with all men, and that their yea may prove yea indeed, and their nay may be nay indeed; for whatever is otherwise cometh of the evil one. And such who make themselves guilty by thus dishonouring God, and the holy profession of his name and truth, such are for judgment by the truth; and the judgment of truth ought to be set over them; that the truth, and those that abide and walk in it, may be clear of their iniquities.

5. And dear Friends, as concerning those who through letting in the enemy of their souls; have lost their part of this our heavenly unity, and sought to break the sweet harmony of the church and churches of Christ in some few places (but which is impossible) we let you know the power of the Lord in righteous judgment is come over their evil works, and they cannot proceed. But divers, who were for a time beguiled and darkened by them, have received mercy from God, and light to see whither they were going; and are returned to the shepherd's fold, to the comfort of their souls, and the praise of God. And concerning them that remain still under the influence of that evil separating spirit in any measure, (being betrayed at unawares) we desire they may be gained upon in a christian tenderness of spirit, and that bowels of compassion may be exercised towards them, for their recovery (if possible) out of the snare, into which, by the high swelling words of others, they are fallen; that so ye may, as the apostle saith, put a difference; saving some by fear, plucking them as brands out of the fire. And where any real simplicity or true tenderness doth remain, it will answer your tenderness, and be won upon by it, and turn from the wandering stars that have misled them, and from the wells that have not the water of life in them, (to nourish and refresh their souls, and feed upon) and trees without fruit.

6. Farther we give you to understand, that several good epistles from divers parts of the world were read amongst us; as from Holland, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Barbadoes, Virginia, Maryland, Jamaica, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, and from sundry parts of this nation, signifying the prosperity of truth, and the increase of Friends, and their great concord and unity in the blessed truth, to our great comfort and joy in the Lord.

7. And that the Friends appointed to inspect the accounts did report to us, that they found the accounts well and fairly kept, and the balance thereof not much different from what it was

last year; so that there was no need of any farther collection this year. And that the Friends that are captives in Mequinez cannot yet be gotten at liberty, though much industry hath been used about it; but Friends are still in hopes to procure their liberty in some time; of which you may hear farther when it is effected.

8. And we give you to know, that the six Friends of this city, that are intrusted for this year with the accounts, are John Ettridge, Benjamin Antrobus, Thomas Barker, Thomas Cox, Thomas Hudson, and John West.

9. And it is the desire of Friends generally, that you all be careful in your Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, in collecting the sufferings of Friends by priests and impropriators for their testimony against tithes; and what goods are taken away from them upon that account, with the value thereof; as also about repairs of steeple-houses, or about not swearing, and all other sufferings on truth's account; and let them be carefully recorded and witnessed, and copies sent up to London, from your Quarterly Meetings to your correspondents; that the sufferings of Friends for their testimonies may not be lost.

10. It was agreed by Friends with one consent, that this meeting be continued the next year, at the usual time, as the Lord shall please to make way for it; and that in order thereunto, two sound faithful Friends in every county, may be desired to come up, that know the state of Friends, and their sufferings, in their respective counties; to whom we leave it to give a farther account of this meeting, and of the glorious presence of the Lord manifested with us here.

11. Finally, dear Friends, we tenderly, in the love of our God, recommend you all to the word of his grace and wisdom, to govern and order you in peace, patience, union and concord, and to shun all occasion of discord and contention that is out of truth; that all your affairs may be managed in true love, in the peaceable spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we tenderly desire and advise, that all Friends every where keep peaceable and quiet in their spirits, and inoffensive in their conversations and discourses, that none let in, entertain, or mix with that jealous evil-surmising spirit, that is at work in some sorts of ungrateful prejudiced persons, who will not see the present providence of God, and mercy we enjoy under the king and his government; eyeing their own interests more than the public good, or peace of the church of Christ.

God Almighty preserve you, and be with you and us all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Signed in behalf of our said meeting, by

RICHARD RICHARDSON.

EPISTLE XII—1689.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in the Lord, whose presence is continued, and blessings renewed unto us, and signally manifest with our assemblies. Blessed be his name forever. The sense of love and unity amongst Friends, and the prosperity of truth in many counties in this nation, and divers remote parts, according as we have had certain accounts, is a great comfort to us in the Lord. And we understand that there is such an openness, in divers counties in this nation, amongst people to receive truth, that some Friends do much desire some faithful labourers amongst them, as the Lord shall make way. In some counties Friends have provided several new meeting-places; wherein their love to the name of the Lord, and the spreading of his truth, is manifest, and truly commendable.

And dear Friends; We desire your testimony against tithes may be kept up in the peaceable Spirit of Christ, as becomes true christians: rather suffering patiently the spoiling of your goods, than any-ways to strive or struggle with the spoilers to retain them by force; but singly commit your cause to the Lord, who will plead it, and judge righteously. And Friends; We desire you would keep an exact account of this and all other your sufferings for truth; and also of your deliverances; to be ready as there shall be occasion to call for them.

Several epistles were read from divers counties in England and Wales, and foreign parts beyond seas, to the comfort and satisfaction of Friends here.

By an epistle from Friends at Amsterdam, an account was given of a new storm of persecution risen at Dantzick, where so great sufferings have been heretofore. Upon which the meeting agreed to order some relief for them.

The present condition of Friends in Ireland being under some consideration; and several Friends from thence being present, having given a brief account thereof in part; the meeting left the further care concerning them to the Meeting for Sufferings here, for the relief of any Friends from thence that may be in distress. And, if they shall see further cause, to recommend their conditions to Friends in the respective counties in England, &c. for a further christian relief, as there shall appear necessity.

The Friends appointed to inspect the accounts did report to us, that they found the accounts well kept; and that there was

no need of a further contribution this year. And that our Friends who are captives at Mequinez do remain as before; only some are come down to Sally, and have liberty to go about the town, under security for their true imprisonment. Great endeavours have been used for their redemption, but it is not yet effected. And we give you notice, that the six Friends of the city, that are intrusted this year with the accounts, are Thomas Cox, Thomas Hudson, John West, Laurence Fullove, Walter Miers, and Walter Benthall.

A concern coming upon Friends of the meeting, concerning several persons, both men and women, who go rambling idly up and down the countries, under pretence of preaching truth, who are out of the unity of Friends in their own country, whose conversations and examples are not savoury, as becomes the truth; Friends in the several counties should beware of such, and give no encouragement nor countenance to them; but warn them to return, and settle in their places and honest employments, and seek unity with their own meetings.

And dear Friends; The prosperity of truth, the increase of love, unity, and peace, amongst all Friends in their respective meetings, and in general, is greatly desired by us. And that every one watch against and shut out all occasions of offences, contentions, and divisions; and in the name of the Lord stop and judge down all whisperings, talebearing, backbiting, and evil-speaking, tending thereunto. And be kind and tender-hearted one to another; and earnestly labour and press for universal love, union, and peace in all the churches of Christ. And walk wisely and circumspectly towards all men, in the peaceable Spirit of Christ Jesus; giving no offence nor occasions to those in outward government, nor way to any controversies, heats, or distractions of this world, about the kingdoms thereof. But pray for the good of all, and submit all to that divine Power and Wisdom which rules over the kingdoms of men. That, as the Lord's hidden ones, that are always quiet in the land, and as those prudent ones and wise in heart, who know when and where to keep silent, you may all approve your hearts to God; keeping out of all airy discourses and words, that may any-ways become snares, or hurtful to truth or Friends; as being sensible that any personal occasion of reproach causes a reflection upon the body.

And Friends; Let every one be watchful against an earthly spirit getting up in any: for that will choak the good seed, and bring forth a slighting or neglecting your testimony in your First-day and Week-day Meetings; and bring a decay of your strength and zeal for God and his truth; and bring a weakness upon you; by reason whereof such will not be able to stand in an hour of temp-

tation. And dear Friends ; For the Lord's sake, exercise your christian care in the education of your children in the fear of God, and plainness and simplicity of truth, both in language and habits.

It was agreed by Friends, with one consent, that this meeting be continued the next year, at the usual time, as the Lord shall please to make way for it. And that in order thereunto, two sound faithful Friends in every county may be desired to come up, that know the state of Friends and their sufferings in their respective counties. And to such as are now here we leave it to give a further account of this meeting, and of the good service and effects thereof. Blessed be the Lord forever. And the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Signed in behalf, and by order, of the Meeting aforesaid.

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XIII—1690.

Dear and faithful Friends and Brethren,

We dearly salute you all in the Lord, with very dear and brotherly love, beyond words. We have still cause greatly to praise and magnify the pure holy name of the Lord our God, for his continued goodness, power, and presence with us until this day, as much as ever since we were a people, to the greatly tendering and enlarging the hearts of many. Blessed be the Lord our God forever.

We are also greatly comforted at this our solemn and weighty assembly, to have so many lively accounts of the love and unity, peace and quietness, among Friends, and of the prosperity of truth, and increase of meetings in divers parts, and an openness and good desires of many people after the blessed truth ; and in the good order and care in the respective meetings of Friends concerned in truth's affairs in Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, &c. ; and that the spirit of division and separation is much weakened, and decreased. In all which we must acknowledge the great power and work of our God in the prosperity thereof, and his great love and care over his heritage. Magnified be his blessed name and power forever.

The tender sense and christian care of this our Yearly Meeting we are engaged faithfully to communicate to you, in these following particulars :

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The suffering that at present chiefly remains upon faithful Friends in divers counties in this nation, by imprisonment and spoil of goods, is for their christian testimony against the oppression of tithes ; of which we have account at this meeting of about forty-six still remaining prisoners ; and many others have their goods taken away in some places excessively. And, therefore, this meeting renew their desires that true accounts be kept upon record, as well of the taking away goods in that case, as of imprisonment ; because in some places there is a defect in that particular. And also it is our desire, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his holy testimony, that all Friends be faithful to him in their testimony against tithes of all sorts ; knowing that since they were ended by Christ, they were imposed and originally sprung from that antichristian root **A POPISH URSURPATION IN CHURCH and STATE.** And that Friends would tenderly consider, that where any decline their testimony, or are negligent in this weighty case, they do thereby increase the weight and burden of sufferings upon them that are faithful, and strengthen the hands of their adversaries.

And dear Friends ; it is our christian and earnest advice and counsel to all Friends concerned, (so far as they are able, or may be capable) to provide school masters and mistresses, who are faithful Friends, to teach and instruct their children. And not to send them to such schools where they are taught the corrupt ways, manners, fashions, and language of the world, and of the heathen in their authors, and names of the heathenish gods and goddesses ; tending greatly to corrupt and alienate the minds of children into an averseness or opposition against the truth, and the simplicity of it : but to take care that you train up your children in the good nurture, admonition, and fear of the Lord, in that plainness and language which become truth. And parents and masters, &c. to be good examples to them, in a sober and godly conversation, and plainness of speech. And not to use the word you, or ye, to a child or servant, &c. nor suffer your substance to be bestowed on your children to furnish them with such things as tend to pride, and to lift them up in vanity, or affect them with the vain fashions of the world.

And also it is our advice, and earnest desire, that parents and guardians of children, in the fear of God, take special care to prevent those under their charge from being engaged or entangled with any upon the account of marriage, before all things relating to their outward estates be firmly agreed on both parts ; that so no breach may be made upon the account of outward things, to the hurt or prejudice of young people.

And we do also in the name of the Lord advise and exhort all

young and unmarried people among Friends, that they do not make any motion or procedure one with another upon the account of marriage, without first acquainting their parents or guardians therewith; and duly waiting upon them for their consent and agreement therein. And we also advise, that, in the first place, all young persons concerned, seriously wait upon the Lord for counsel and clearness in this weighty concern, before they make any procedure with any in order to marriage; that the Lord may be in their eye: so as they may not be led by any forward, brittle, or uncertain affections in this great concern, to their own hurt, grief of their friends, and dishonour of truth. And let it be the godly concern of both Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, to be careful and mindful of the preservation and good of children in this matter, as here proposed and signified; and not to omit giving due and faithful warnings and admonitions in this great and weighty concern.

Several good and comfortable epistles from Friends in divers parts were read in this meeting; as Barbadoes, New-Jersey, Antigua, Bermudas, Ireland, Scotland, Amsterdam, and Dantzick, &c. signifying the state and condition of Friends in those parts, and that love and unity are continued amongst them; and that truth prospers in New-England, and other American parts.

By letters from Ireland, we understand that their meetings are peaceable and quiet. But as to their outward substance, many have sustained great loss, and are brought low, by the common calamity that lies upon that nation. In consideration whereof, Friends of the Meeting for Sufferings have already taken some care to convey some relief to them, according to last Yearly Meeting's advice. Which being done, was kindly and tenderly accepted of by Friends concerned in the north of Ireland. And the further care concerning them is still continued to the said Meeting for Sufferings.

By their letters from Amsterdam and Dantzick, we understand that our Friends in Dantzick are again imprisoned; and that nothing is laid to their charge, but meeting together to wait upon the Lord; nor any thing else required of them by the magistrates, but to promise to depart from that city; which they cannot for conscience sake consent to. This meeting has ordered something to be sent over to the Friends of Amsterdam, for the present relief of our said suffering Friends at Dantzick. And in case there shall be further need before the next year, this meeting doth intrust the Meeting for Sufferings here to supply their necessities, as they shall see cause.

The Friends appointed to view the accounts, report that they have found them well stated and kept; and judge that there is

no present necessity for a further contribution this year. And also they are very sensible of the great care, labours, and endeavours of Friends at London with the government in Friend's behalf, for their ease and relief; which the Lord has made effectual in several respects.

And as concerning our Friends at Mequinez and Sally, endeavours have not been wanting to obtain their redemption; but as yet it cannot be effected. We hear from them that they are well; and desire that their loves might be communicated to Friends here in their native country.

And we give you notice, that the six Friends of the city, that are entrusted this year with the accounts, are Walter Miers, Walter Benthall, Thomas Cooper, Thomas Lacy, George Green, and Hercey Wilson.

And dear friends; although we gave plain and christian advice and admonition last year for Friends to beware of all airy discourses, disputes and controversies, about the kingdoms of this world; that all might walk wisely and circumspectly, in subjection to the divine and over-ruling power and wisdom of God; yet contrarywise, to our grief, we have heard too much complaint and reflections, occasioned by some who have not observed a true bridle to their tongues but have been too busy, loose and airy, in discourses of that nature. And therefore, we do exhort and admonish all such in the fear of God, and as they have respect unto his holy truth and innocent people, and their own safety, to be watchful, careful, and circumspect for time to come; that none may suffer as busy-bodies, nor bring suffering, or reproach, or cause jealousies to be raised, upon or against others that are innocent; and singly desire the preservation, safety and peace of all Friends, in truth and innocency towards all men. And that all Friends be truly thankful to God for the present mercy, as to the peace and liberty and blessed opportunities we now enjoy; and desire that all Friends may make a faithful improvement thereof; and may show it forth by their diligent attending upon the worship and service of God, at the usual times and seasons appointed for the same.

Lastly, it is agreed and concluded unanimously, that this meeting be continued the next year, at the usual time, as the Lord shall please to give us liberty and make way for the same. And that in order thereunto, two faithful and understanding Friends in every county may be desired to come up; who may be enabled to give a certain account of the condition and sufferings of Friends in their respective counties.

And we leave it to Friends that are now come up to this meeting, to give further account of the good service and advantage

thereof; through the Lord's love and goodness plentifully manifested among us. Blessed be his glorious name and power for ever.

The God of peace, and fountain of all our mercies, be with you all. Amen.

Signed in behalf, and by order of the Meeting aforesaid.

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XIV—1691.

Dear and Faithful Friends and Brethren,

We tenderly salute you all in our Lord Jesus Christ, and blessed union of his precious life; who hath eminently appeared among us and with us in this our heavenly solemnity; still ministering fresh encouragement unto us, by his divine power and counsel, to persevere in faithfulness and diligence in his work and service to the end of our days, and finishing our course with joy, as many of his dear ancient and faithful servants have already done. Blessed be his glorious name forever.

We are much comforted at this our weighty assembly, in the many good accounts given as heretofore of truth's prosperity, and the increase of Christ's kingdom, and the abounding of love, peace and unity, among Friends; and the decrease and dying of the spirit of division and enmity in divers places where it has entered; and that meetings are increased, and many people's hearts opened to hear and receive the truth: and that in some places new meeting-houses are erected, and others about preparing and building; which are and will be of great advantage for truth's promotion, we doubt not, as experience hath long and clearly shown; and that good order and christian care in your meetings aforesaid, is, and we hope will be, continued in the service of truth and one another, to the honour of God and exaltation of his holy name and truth, and the strengthening and encouraging of Friends in general, and one another in the service thereof; which our souls earnestly desire, and hope you will ever be mindful of; that our God may have his praise, and you all your lasting peace and comfort.

We perceive the suffering that chiefly remains on faithful Friends in divers counties, by imprisonment and spoil of goods, doth increase, for our ancient christian testimony against the old and grand oppression of tithes; we having now account of about eighty Friends prisoners on that account; whose faithfulness the

Lord will reward. And we desire that the same christian testimony may be duly kept up; and such as are unfaithful therein be diligently exhorted to obedience and faithfulness to Christ Jesus; that they may not strengthen the persecutor's hands, increase other sufferings, nor make void truth's testimony therein, which so many have offered up and laid down their lives for.

These things are also recommended to your godly care; and it is our tender and christian advice, for the Lord's sake, and his blessed name and truth's sake, that Friends be diligent in keeping their Week-day meetings, as duly as on First-days, in his worship and service; and that you do encourage the faithful Women's meetings, and the settling them where they are wanting, and may with convenience be settled; knowing their service, and what need there is also of their godly care in the church of Christ in divers weighty respects, proper to them. And that great care be taken about marriages, for the consent of parents, due and orderly publications thereof, and solemnizing of them in a meeting appointed for that end and purpose; which method is convenient and commendable, as it has been lately made appear in the eye of the government, and well resented. And that Friends be reminded of this meeting's former advice against marriage with near kindred, and against marrying by priests, and with persons of the world, unequally yoking with unbelievers; and against too early and unsavory proceedings in second marriages after the death of husband or wife, contrary to the due method and practice of faithful Friends in truth, and tending to the dishonour and reproach thereof.

And that Friends take care to keep to truth and plainness, in language, habit, deportment and behaviour; that the simplicity of truth in these things may not wear out nor be lost in our days, nor in our posterity's; and be exemplary to their children in each, and train them up therein; that modesty and sobriety may be countenanced, and the fear of the Lord take place and increase among them; and to avoid pride and immodesty in apparel, and extravagant wigs, and all other vain and superfluous fashions of the world, and in God's holy fear watch against, and keep out the spirit and corrupt friendship of the world; and that no fellowship may be held or had with the unfruitful works of darkness, nor therein with the workers thereof. And to avoid unnecessary frequenting taverns, ale-houses, all looseness, excess, and unprofitable and idle discourses, mispending their precious time and substance, to the dishonour of truth, and scandal of our holy profession. Let your godly care and earnest endeavours be to stop and prevent all reproaches and scandals in these or any other cases. And that all Friends watch over their children; and none

to indulge or suffer them in pride, or corrupt liberty ; whereby they become exposed to the world, to be ensnared either in their marriages, or evil conversation tending to their hurt and ruin. And that Friends keep to their wonted example and testimony against the superstitious observation of days.

It is also the advice of this meeting, that all and every your meeting-houses, and mansion-houses, where meetings are or may be, be entered upon record, as the law directs ; each particularly : we having seen both the service and safety thereof, and the hurt and danger that may come by omission. And that care be taken in each Monthly Meeting, that Friends who have estates to dispose of, by will or otherwise be particularly advised to make their wills, or settle their estates, in due time : to prevent the inconveniences, loss and trouble, that may follow upon their relations and friends, and injury to the poor, through their dying intestate. Delays and omissions in this case having been very prejudicial in divers respects.

We are glad to hear that care is taken in some places, according to former advice, for the providing school-masters and mistresses who are faithful Friends, to instruct Friends' children in such method as truth allows. And we desire that Friends go on in that care to promote such education and schools, for the advantage of their children and posterity.

Divers good epistles and accounts were read in this meeting from foreign parts ; as Ireland, Scotland, Amsterdam, Dantzick, Jamaica, Nevis, Maryland, Rhode-Island (and two from Friends, captives at Mequinez in Barbary, under the emperor of Morocco) intimating the prosperity of truth, and the peace and unity of Friends among themselves, and their love to Friends in this nation ; and in many places their want of faithful labourers ; and their desires for the spreading of truth as much as may be, both by Friends' books and ministry ; and also to be furnished with books, as Friends can send them.

There yet remain nine English Friends captives at Mequinez, and three at Murbay ; who have received the truth there (it being three or four days journey distant,) who correspond with each other by letters. One Friend (to wit, Joseph Wasey) being lately redeemed, and newly come over, gave a large account to this meeting of their miserable hard usage in captivity ; having no lodging but under arches, in deep places on the cold ground, winter and summer ; only water for their drink ; and no bread allowed them by the king, but of old rotten stinking barley ; and no clothes, but a frock once in two years ; and forced to hard labour ; (except three days in a year ;) and more especially on the Sixth day of the week (which is their day of worship) they are

compelled to carry heavy burdens on their heads, running from sun rising to sun-setting, with brutish black boys following with whips and stripes at their pleasure. Many of the other captives perish and die, through their extreme hardships, and want of food to sustain them : as in all likelihood Friends there had, if Friends and their relations here had not sent them some relief; seven pence a month, formerly allowed them by the king, being now taken from them. Their sufferings are lamentable ; yet the Lord's power has wonderfully preserved them, and greatly restrained the fury and cruelty of that emperor towards poor Friends there ; in whose behalf the said Joseph Wasey did, by an interpreter, speak to the said emperor ; giving him an account of their innocent conversation and religion ; which he heard with moderation ; though he often kills men in cold blood at his pleasure.

Joseph Wasey also signified that Friends' day-time being taken up with hard servitude, they are necessitated to keep their meetings in the night season to wait on God. And that the aforesaid captive Friends were very thankful for the relief sent from hence ; which was very refreshing to them.

An epistle from Friends' Half-Year Meeting in Ireland was read ; giving an account, that notwithstanding Friends' great suffering and exercise in that kingdom, Friends there have been well supported by the Lord's power under the same ; having yet left them wherewithal to relieve them that stand in need and are impoverished. And accordingly our dear and ancient Friend William Edmundson (who lately came from Ireland, having with his family undergone deep suffering) also acquainted the meeting, that although Friends there have undergone great suffering and losses, yet care is taken that no Friends need now come from thence for want of a present supply, or without a certificate from Friends of some meeting there. Wherefore, if there be necessity hereafter to minister to their relief when they are capable to receive and make use thereof, it is left to the care of the meeting here for Sufferings to give you notice thereof in its time and season, when further necessity shall require.

We do also acquaint you, that the Friends appointed by this meeting to inspect the accounts, report back to this meeting, that they find them truly stated and fairly kept ; and nothing of what was contributed towards captives' redemption is disbursed this year past ; no opportunity having yet presented for their redemption, though much endeavoured ; but sixty pounds added, being repaid by Levan Buskin, who was a captive redeemed from Algiers some years since. But that the contribution intended for the ease and relief of suffering and necessitous Friends, is wholly expended and in debt, by reason of the urgent occasions to en-

deavour the ease and relief of Friends that do or may suffer in divers general cases (and also the charity bestowed upon divers of our suffering Friends and brethren of Ireland, both there and here;) wherein our Friends of London have been very industrious, and intend not to be wanting therein, as the Lord shall yet afford opportunity. Whereupon they offer it to this meeting as their judgment, that it is needful there should be a further supply, by a general contribution among Friends, for the like service, to be made this year. Which being duly and weightily considered, this meeting agrees unanimously that a contribution be made by Friends throughout all the several meetings of Friends in England and Wales, for the supply and service of Friends and truth, as aforesaid. And it is recommended by this meeting to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings aforesaid; who are desired to take care therein with as much convenient speed as may be; and to return the collections to the six Friends of the city, who are intrusted this year with the accounts; namely, Thomas Lacy, Thomas Cooper, George Green, Hercey Wilson, Jos. Wright, and Cornelius Mason, or any of them.

This meeting agrees, for the taking off and spreading Friends' books for the service of truth, that such a number of Friends' books as shall be hereafter printed by their approbation (excepting collections of books) be taken off by each Quarterly Meeting, as will only amount to two books of a sort to each Monthly Meeting; provided the two books do not exceed one shilling in price. And if any one book be above six-pence price, then but one of that sort to each Monthly Meeting; who may send for as many more as they have occasion for, or desire [we understand there are about 151 Monthly Meetings in England and Wales:] and that the said books be sent by the several correspondents in London (or by their order) to the correspondents of each county; who are desired to send up the money for the books, when received, to the Friends that are correspondents in London; and to be diligent in spreading Friends' books for truth's service.

It is unanimously agreed and concluded, that this meeting be continued the next year, as formerly, at the usual time, as the Lord shall make way for it. And that, for the service of truth and the churches of Christ, two faithful understanding Friends in every county, who are truly approved in universal love and unity and peace among Friends from whence they come, may be desired to come up; who may be enabled to give a certain and clear account of the condition and suffering of Friends, and truth's prosperity, in their respective counties.

And dear Friends and brethren; we do, in the love of God,

tenderly recommend all the foregoing matters contained in this paper to your godly and christian care, to observe and manage in his wisdom; as having an eye to the service and prosperity of truth, preservation of his people therein, and the peace of the churches of Christ, and increase of his kingdom and government in this age, and in the ages to come.

The God of peace be with you all. In whose dear love we remain, your faithful Friends and brethren.

It is desired that Friends keep the Yearly Meeting papers together in a book, in each Monthly and Quarterly Meeting.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

An epistle of dear G. F's (which was written with his own hand, and left sealed up, with this superscription; viz. NOT TO BE OPENED BEFORE THE TIME) was read, and agreed to be printed with this Yearly Meeting paper, as followeth.

For the Yearly and Second-day's Meeting in London. And to all the Children of God in all places in the World.

BY AND FROM G. F.

THIS FOR ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD EVERY WHERE; THAT ARE LED BY HIS SPIRIT, AND DO WALK IN HIS LIGHT; IN WHICH THEY HAVE LIFE, AND UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON, AND ONE WITH ANOTHER:

Keep all your meetings in the name of the Lord Jesus, that be gathered in his name, by his light, grace, truth, power, and spirit: By which you will feel his blessed and refreshing presence among you and in you, to your comfort, and God's glory.

And now, all Friends; All your meetings, both men's and women's, Monthly and Quarterly, and Yearly, &c. were set up by the power, and spirit, and wisdom of God. And in them you do know that you have felt both his power, and spirit, and wisdom, and blessed refreshing presence among you and in you, to his praise and glory, and your comfort; so that you have been a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid.

And although many loose and unruly spirits have risen betimes to oppose you and them, both in print and otherwise; yet you have seen how they have come to naught; and the Lord hath blasted them, and brought their deeds to light, and made them manifest to be the trees without fruit, and wells without water, and wau-

dering stars from the firmament of God's power, and the raging waves of the sea, casting up their mire and dirt; and many of them are like the dog turned to his old vomit, and the sow that was washed turned again to the mire. And this hath been the condition of many, God knoweth, and his people.

And therefore, all stand stedfast in Christ Jesus, your head; in whom you all are one, male and female; and know his government. And of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. But there will be an end of the devil's, and of all them that be out of Christ, and do oppose it and him; whose judgment doth not linger, and their damnation doth not slumber. And therefore, in God and Christ's light, life, spirit, and power, live and walk (that is over all, and the seed of it) in love, and in innocency, and simplicity: and in righteousness and holiness dwell, and in his power and Holy Ghost, in which God's kingdom doth stand.

All children of new and heavenly Jerusalem (that is from above, and is free, with all her holy spiritual children) to her keep your eyes.

And as for this spirit of rebellion and opposition, that hath risen formerly and lately, it is out of the kingdom of God, and heavenly Jerusalem; and is for judgment and condemnation, with all its books, words, and works. And therefore Friends are to live and walk in the power and spirit of God, that is over it; and in the seed that will bruise and break it to pieces: In which seed you have joy and peace with God, and power and authority to judge it. And your unity is in the power and spirit of God, that doth judge it. And all God's witnesses in his tabernacle go out against it, and always have and will.

And let no man live to self, but to the Lord, as they will die in him. And seek the peace of the church of Christ, and the peace of all men in him: for blessed are the peace-makers. And dwell in the pure, peaceable, heavenly wisdom of God, that is gentle, and easy to be intreated, that is full of mercy: all striving to be of one mind, heart, soul, and judgment in Christ, having his mind and spirit dwelling in you; building up one another in the love of God, which doth edify the body of Christ (his church), who is the holy head thereof. So glory to God through Christ, in this age, and all other ages; who is the rock and foundation, and the Emanuel, God with us, Amen, over all, the beginning and the ending. In him live and walk; in whom you have life eternal; in whom you will feel me, and I you.

All children of New Jerusalem that descends from above (the holy city, which the Lord and the Lamb is the light of, and the

temple), in it they are born again of the spirit. So Jerusalem that is above is the mother of them that are born of the spirit. And so they that come, and are come, to heavenly Jerusalem, are those that receive Christ (and he giveth them power to become the sons of God), and are born again of the spirit. So Jerusalem is their mother. And such do come to heavenly Mount Sion, and the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect: and are come to the church of the living God, written in heaven; and have the name of God, and the city of God, written upon them. So here is a new mother, that bringeth forth a heavenly and spiritual generation.

There is no schism, nor division, nor contention, nor strife, in heavenly Jerusalem, nor in the body of Christ; which is made up of living stones, a spiritual house. And Christ is not divided; for in him there is peace. Christ saith, "In me you have peace." And he is from above, and not of this world. But in the world below, in the spirit of it, there is trouble. Therefore keep in Christ, and walk in him. Amen. G. F.

And Jerusalem was the mother of all the true christians before the apostasy. And since, the outward christians are broken into many sects, and they have gotten many mothers. But all they that are come out of the apostasy, by the power and spirit of Christ, Jerusalem that is above is their mother (and none below her), who doth nourish all her spiritual children. G. F.

London, the 4th of the Fourth Month, 1691.

Dear Friends,

We being appointed by dear George Fox, and the Yearly Meeting, to consider of a method for the printing his books, papers, epistles, and manuscripts, desire you will make search in your Quarterly and Monthly Meeting Books, and among Friends, what books, papers, epistles, or manuscripts you have of his; and send up the titles and dates of them that are dated, and the first and last words or sentence of each book, paper, or manuscript; that we may the better distinguish one from another, of all books, papers, or manuscripts, written or printed.

So not doubting your care and diligence herein, with our dear loves, we rest, your Friends and brethren.

John Blaiklin,	John Whitehead,
George Whitehead,	Thomas Robbertson,
Thomas Dockwra,	Benjamin Antrobus,
William Mead,	Thomas Lower,
John Rouse,	Thomas Ellwood,
John Vaughton,	John Field,
Stephen Crisp,	

EPISTLE XV—1692.

Dear and Faithful Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in the Lord with very dear and tender love, which lives in our hearts towards you all, and God's whole heritage; which we earnestly desire the prosperity of, in that pure life, love, peace, and concord in Christ Jesus, which will endure; being truly comforted and refreshed, as heretofore, to hear of truth's prosperity, and the Lord's work going forward, and of the faithfulness and love that is among Friends in this and other nations of the world. And we have great cause still to bless the name of our God, for his preserving and supporting us by his power to this day; and for that blessed immediate sense thereof, and reviving and comforting of many thereby, in our solemn assemblies at this time.

The most material things of concern agreed upon, as desired by this meeting, and many faithful Friends and brethren, we do hereby faithfully recommend to your godly care and observation, as heretofore.

Being sensible how incident youth is to be corrupted, and how liable to corrupt and hurt one another by evil example and liberty, it is earnestly requested, that all parents among Friends take all godly and christian care in the education of their children, and be good examples to them, and not to allow them in any thing that may gratify a vain mind, in immodest apparel, or foolish garbs, or other extravagancies, tending to their hurt, and reproach of our holy profession, and incurring God's displeasure and judgment, which stands against the pride of life and haughtiness: but sincerely to use their best endeavours to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in sobriety, modesty, and plainness in apparel, language and conversation, as becometh our holy profession and christian religion.

And that Friends be careful and diligent to keep up their ancient christian testimony against the oppression of tithes: for the more faithful and unanimous Friends are therein, we are really persuaded the Lord will the sooner make way for our ease and deliverance from that burden. And Friends to be careful to record all the sufferings in that and other cases for the truth: for we understand that Friends' sufferings do increase in divers places; we having now account of one hundred and eleven prisoners, chiefly for non-payment of tithes, besides nine prisoners deceased since last Yearly Meeting.

And to prevent reproach and division in the cases following, it is advised and earnestly desired, that the payment of just debts be not delayed by any professing truth beyond the time promised and agreed upon: nor occasion given of complaint to those they deal with, by their backwardness of payment where no time is limited: nor any to overcharge themselves with too much trading and commerce beyond their capacities to discharge a good conscience towards all men: and that all Friends concerned be very careful not to contract extravagant debts, to the endangering the wronging others and their families; which some have done, to the grieving the hearts of the upright: nor to break their promises, contracts, or agreements, in their buying and selling (or in any other lawful affairs), to the injuring themselves and others, occasioning strife, contention, and reproach to truth and Friends. And it is advised that all Friends that are entering into trade, or that are in trade, and have not stocks sufficient of their own to answer the trade they aim at, be very cautious of running themselves into debt, without advising with some of their ancient and experienced Friends among whom they live; and more especially such trading as hath its dependance upon sea adventures.

And that in all cases of controversy and difference, the persons concerned therein either speedily compose the difference between themselves, or make choice of some faithful unconcerned Friends to determine the same, and they to stand to their determination: or otherwise, if they cannot agree upon the choice, to submit to the Monthly Meeting's choice of certain persons meet to inspect and determine the controversy, and to stand to their award and final determination thereof; that such controversies may not be continued to cause a stink and reproach; for they are a great shame and scandal.

And that care be taken for the speedy ending of all controversies and differences among Friends; and all Friends to take heed of being parties with one or another for the prolonging thereof. And such persons as refuse to submit to truth's order, or to hear the church of Christ, are to be disowned and testified against, according to Christ's doctrine on that behalf.

And all Friends and brethren to be careful and watchful against all whisperings, backbitings, and tale-carrying, to the defaming of Friends or others, and to put a speedy stop thereto; and pass righteous judgment upon all whisperers and backbiters, who appear instruments of division and offences, contrary to that peaceable truth and gospel we profess.

And that where any have received offence from any other, first

to speak privately to the party concerned, and endeavour reconciliation between themselves; and not to whisper or aggravate matters against them behind their backs, to the making parties, and the breach wider.

And concerning Friends' marriages, with respect to the usual, due, orderly and commendable proceedings therein (being a matter of very great and weighty concern to the whole body of Friends in general, as well as in particular, for which we have been and are yet liable to be called to an account by the government, there having been several great endeavours to provide a severe law against clandestine marriages, not yet brought to an issue, and great care among Friends to vindicate our method to authority, that nothing might be enacted to affect Friends in that case to their injury or suffering), we therefore advise, that all such as profess the truth among Friends, do publish their intentions of marriage at two sundry Monthly Meetings at least, or at two sundry Two-weeks Meetings, in such places where they are settled, before they solemnize the same; that convenient time may be allowed Friends concerned, for inquiry and satisfaction concerning the consent of parents and guardians, and their clearness from all scandal and pre-contracts; that Friends may own and stand by their proceedings before the government, and all in authority; which otherwise they cannot, if they proceed not in the due and orderly publication and method of truth settled among Friends; it being a matter greatly inquired into, truly warrantable, and to be stood by.

And we signify to you, that though great endeavours have been used for Friends' relief from the burthen of the imposition of oaths, which a large progress has been made in, and yet hitherto disappointed of the good ends of Friends' endeavours; howbeit, there is so much preparation and way made already for farther endeavours for Friends' relief in that case, that this meeting has consented and agreed that when the Lord is pleased to open a way for Friends' ease and relief in that case, further endeavours may be used to obtain it; and the Meeting for Sufferings here is to take care therein.

And this meeting was well satisfied and very glad in the sense they had of the innocency and peaceableness of the body of our Friends in general, towards the civil government under which we live, and enjoy our present liberty in the peaceable exercise of our tender consciences towards Almighty God; to whom we are humbly thankful for the same; being obliged to demean ourselves not only as a grateful people, but, as a christian society, to live peaceably and inoffensively under the present government,

as we have always done under the various revolutions of governments ever since we were a people, according to our ancient christian principle and practice; in which we hope we shall ever persevere to the end of our days, according as we are enjoined by our peaceable Saviour Christ Jesus, and the christian advice of his faithful servants and ministers among us; we being a people clear in the sight of God from all evil designs, plots and conspiracies whatsoever; and hope in God that we shall continue a people always quiet in the land, having nothing but love and goodwill to all men. For which end we earnestly desire and hope that a christian care may not be wanting among you, for the preservation of our whole society in that innocent life and peaceable conversation, which is agreeable to our christian principle and profession; wherein we have from the beginning found our safety and peace with God, and him to be our defence; being fully persuaded, that this our ancient christian testimony (publicly owned among us) none can gainsay, nor any faithful Friends to God or Christ can ever decline it; being assured that our God will in his own due time remove all offences and causeless jealousies and reproaches, tending to cloud our innocency, and will set his own power, and the peaceable kingdom of his dear Son, over all.

We further intimate to you, that we had at this our Yearly Meeting divers seasonable and tender epistles from our Friends in foreign and remote parts of the world, beyond the seas; as Barbadoes, Jamaica, Maryland, West-Jersey, Bermudas, and also from Scotland, intimating the progress and prosperity of truth, and God's love to Friends in those parts. And also

An epistle from Amsterdam, signifying the prosperity of truth in those parts; and that at Dantzick there are now no prisoners; and that the Duke of Holstein has put forth a declaration for liberty of conscience; and also that they have received what was last year sent them, for the relief of Dantzick Friends; and that they still stand in need to be supplied by Friends; which care is taken to answer accordingly. They desire to have some epistles from Friends here, which would be very acceptable to them. One of them, Nicholas Rust, a faithful Friend of Dantzick, who has been a great sufferer there, being now at liberty, is come over to visit Friends here; who, though he understands not our language, yet is sensible of and refreshed in Friends' love and tenderness towards him.

Several letters from Friends who still remain in their long and sore captivity in Mequinez, to divers Friends here, were read; intimating the state of things with them, and that they received our epistles from our last Yearly Meeting; and acknowledged

Friends' love and diligence here in labouring for their ransom. And that since the last Yearly Meeting, the Lord hath delivered three of them, by death, out of their great misery and servitude; who ended their days in great content and peace. Their names are John Bound, Richard Nevet, and Thomas Harrell. The distressed case of the remainder of them (as last year signified) is still before Friends; and divers are engaged in the love of God to use their endeavours for their ransom.

An epistle came from the Half-Yearly Meeting in Ireland, setting forth Friends' present condition; their tenderly accepting what was formerly ordered for their relief; and also that the sum of one hundred pounds, remitted from Friends in Barbadoes, for their further relief, is ordered to be remitted to them. Whereupon this meeting refered the farther management thereof to the Meeting for Sufferings here, to take care for their further supply, as they shall see meet.

Friends appointed to view the accounts, report that they find them well and truly stated and kept. And it is advised, that, for the future, when there shall be occasion for a further contribution, Friends that come from the several counties bring up with them an account of the total sum of each collection that may be made in their respective counties, to the next ensuing Yearly Meeting after such collection is made; that it may be compared with the accounts here, for Friends' satisfaction therein.

For the dispersing Friends' books for the service of truth, advice was given last Yearly Meeting; which we desire may be observed. And it is by this meeting likewise agreed and advised, that one book at least of a sort that shall be printed (except books of collections) be kept in each Monthly or Quarterly Meeting, for the future service of truth and Friends.

The weighty accounts given at this our solemn assembly, from the respective counties in England and Wales, by the Friends sent up, as also by some epistles from several counties and particular Friends, importing the prosperity of God's blessed truth, and increase of Christ's government and peace in his heritage, are greatly to our comfort and refreshment; and we humbly thank God, and bless his name, for the same; being truly rejoiced, and our hearts affected, in the sense of the christian care, diligence, love, unity and peace among Friends: in which we pray God to keep all his people faithful unto the end.

The six Friends of the city appointed and intrusted this year with the accounts, are William Mead, William Crouch, William Macket, John Staploe, Cornelius Mason, and Joseph Wright.

And it was agreed by Friends at this meeting, that it should

again be observed the next year at the same time, if the Lord will. And that Friends of each county, at their Quarterly Meeting preceding this time of the year, do agree upon two faithful Friends of their county to attend the service of the said meeting.

We must needs say that we were truly comforted in the meekness of love and harmony that appeared among Friends in the management of most of the important affairs of this meeting. So the God of all peace be with you all. Amen.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

AN EPISTLE SUBJOINED TO THE PRECEDING, FROM S. C. AND
G. W.

Dear Friends,

With respect to our ancient and innocent testimony in the foregoing epistle, it is upon us further to add, Away with those upbraiding characters of Jacobites and Williamites, Jemmites and Billites, &c. so used by the world's people one against another, to make parties and divisions, and to stir up wrath and enmity. Let the spirit of enmity, strife and contention, be judged and kept out of God's heritage for ever; and let us have no such upbraiding distinctions in God's camp, nor any thing tending to strife, sedition or discord; no more than of Whig and Tory, long since judged out and testified against.

And shew forth your affection to Christ, to his kingdom and government, by a quiet life, and peaceable subjection unto the higher powers that God is pleased to set over us, which are at his disposing, and not ours; it being our christian duty to desire their good, and to persuade them to what good we can, for their safety, and our ease and relief; that in all godliness and honesty you may be innocently preserved out of all offences, reproach and scandal, and all real occasions thereof.

O Friends, truth and innocency will live and work through all; and our ancient testimony and life therein will stand and continue the same through all revolutions and interchanges that God is pleased to bring or suffer among men, for causes best known to himself; which therefore must not be the subjects of dispute or controversy among any of his people; his judgments being unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. Wherefore let all study to be quiet, and mind their own business, in God's holy fear; and none to be meddling or exercising themselves in things too high for them.

The God of all our mercies, and well-spring of our life and peace, who hath ordained us to live in unity, be with you all. Amen.

S. C. G. W.

EPISTLE XVI—1693.

Dear and truly beloved Friends and Brethren,

We tenderly salute you in the Lord with love unfeigned; heartily desiring Sion's prosperity, and earnestly praying for the peace of Jerusalem, and of the whole Israel of God and church of Christ, that all the assemblies of Friends may be truly comforted and abundantly refreshed, in the living sense of the presence, and unspeakable goodness of our God, as we have been beyond expression in this our solemn and seasonable assembly at this time; for which we are greatly obliged to bless and praise the God and fountain of all our mercies, and always to continue humbly thankful to him for the same.

The principal matters of most general concern agreed upon by this meeting to be communicated, we do faithfully recommend to your christian care and notice as heretofore.

Our last yearly epistle being very comprehensive and weighty, and more large than usual, it is earnestly desired, that the contents thereof be seriously reminded in all your Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, in order to the faithful performance, according to our christian religion and profession in the purity thereof, and as God's faithful witness in all hearts doth enjoin, and is ready to assist all the faithful and diligent in the conduct of their conversations.

And therefore that all due and godly care be taken and exercised among all Friends in the christian and sober education of their children and youth, which are under their care and trust, that they be good examples and patterns, both in conversation, words, and habits, becoming our holy profession and humble religion of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, against the pride of life; against the breach of promise, injuring and defrauding others in their properties, trade and commerce, &c. against the grand oppression and anti-christian yoke of tithes, that our christian testimony, borne and greatly suffered for, be faithfully maintained against them in all respects; and against steeple-house rates or lays; as also against the burthen and imposition of oaths; and against all whisperings and backbitings, which tend to strife and division, and making parties; and all disorderly

and undue proceedings in marriages ; that truth's order, method, and testimony be faithfully kept unto concerning all these matters, and the judgment thereof, in God's wisdom, set over all perverseness, unfaithfulness, and disorderly walking, tending to the dishonour of God, the reproach and scandal of our holy profession, and of us his people.

It is desired, that Friends at all their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings be reminded to call for the records of the sufferings of Friends, to see that they be duly gathered, truly entered and kept, and accordingly sent up as hath been often advised, both of what tithes, &c. are pretended to be due, and for how long a time, and the time when taken, and by and for whom ; and what goods are taken, and the value thereof, as well of those not exceeding, as those exceeding the sums or quantities demanded (it being a suffering in both for truth's sake ;) they being in these particulars found defective and imperfect in divers counties, which is an obstruction to the general record of Friends' sufferings. And therefore the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings are advised to take more care for the future, that all Friends' sufferings for truth's sake may be brought up as full and complete in all respects as possibly may be.

A complaint being made about some ship-masters (who profess the truth, and are esteemed Quakers) carrying guns in their ships, supposing thereby to defend and secure themselves and their ships, contrary to their former principle and practice, and to the indangering their own and others lives thereby ; also giving occasion of more severe hardships and sufferings to be inflicted on such Friends as are pressed into ships of war, who for conscience sake cannot fight nor destroy men's lives, it is therefore recommended to the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings whereunto such ship-masters belong, to deal with them in God's wisdom and tender love, to stir them up, and awaken their consciences, that they may seriously consider how they injure their own souls in so doing, and what occasion they give to make the truth and Friends to suffer by their declension, and acting contrary thereunto, through disobedience and unbelief ; placing their security in that which is altogether insecure and dangerous ; which we are really sorry for, and sincerely desire their recovery and safety from destruction, that their faith and confidence may be in the arm and power of God.

Dear Friends,

You very well know our christian principle and profession in this matter, both with respect to God and Cæsar, that because we are subjects of Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world, we cannot fight, [JOHN xviii. 36.] yet, being subjects of Cæsar's

kingdom, we pay our taxes, tribute, &c. according to the example of Christ and his holy apostles, relating to Christ's kingdom and Cæsar's; wherein we are careful not to offend [MATT. xvii. 27. and xxii. 20. ROM. xiii. 6, 7.] being also very glad, and much satisfied, in the many testimonies given at this meeting, of our Friends' innocency, and quiet and peaceable behaviour under the outward government, as becomes our christian principle and profession.

Our dear Friends and brethren Thomas Wilson and James Dickinson, being by the good providence of God preserved in their travels, and safely returned, and present at this meeting, gave account of their eminent preservation and deliverance both by sea and land, and of their travels and service in Barbadoes, East and West-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, New-England, North-Carolina, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Antigua, Nevis; and that they found Friends in good unity in most parts, and great openness to truth, and in many parts their great need of being visited, and that Friends there much desire it. And that in New-England, the cry of the blood of Friends formerly put to death there, is much revived, by the late judgment and confusion fallen upon the professors there, about witchcraft; several being there put to death, under pretence of being witches, which they wickedly accused Friends formerly with; insomuch that some of the more moderate people among them declared, that they believed the hand of the Lord would not be taken from off that place, until a day of humiliation be appointed, to acknowledge and condemn that action in putting the Quakers to death; which we pray God give them repentance for.

Four epistles from Ireland (one from the Half-Year's Meeting in Dublin, another from Ulster Province, another from Munster Province, the fourth from the Province-Meeting at Leinster) were read; intimating the goodness of God in their preservation, and his presence amongst them, and how well things are, with respect to unity, peace and concord among themselves; and withal they return their grateful acknowledgments of Friends' dear love, great affection, and charity here towards them, for the relief of poor Friends that greatly suffered by the late calamities, which hath been to the great refreshment of the bowels of many.

Several other epistles from foreign parts, as Barbadoes, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Scotland, and Holland, were read, signifying for the most part, the love and unity amongst Friends, and great openness in divers parts, with desires of Friends' prayers for them, particularly in Pennsylvania. And that in Barbadoes there hath been a very violent distemper which has caused a great mortality.

A letter also from Jamaica, signifying the sad effects of the late terrible earthquake there, by the destruction of many, with their substance; two-thirds of the people (as is supposed) at Port-Royal, and the most of Friends then there, being lost; except those that were at a Monthly Meeting, twelve miles distant from Port-Royal, who were by that mean preserved.

An epistle from Amsterdam in Holland, signifying their meetings are quiet, and that they are thankful to God for it; and their desires to be visited.

And our dear Friend John Furley of Colchester, being newly returned out of Holland, and present at this meeting, gave a full account that he hath lately visited all the meetings in Holland, and the low countries in those parts, except one little meeting, which he could not get to, the place being much covered with water. And that there is some openness in some places, and great flocking of strangers to the meeting at Amsterdam.

An account was given of Dantzick Friends, that they have been quiet one year and a half, and so continue, though but few are left; some having died under persecution. The magistrates there are now pretty kind. And that there are a people raised up and increased in Germany, from among the LUTHERANS, called PIETISTS, and by some called QUAKERS; many whereof are persons of learning, and of the gentry: that they are a people of sober conversations; persecuted by the Duke of Saxony and the priests, but favoured and tolerated by the Duke of Brandenburg. Several Friends' books, at their request, have been spread among them. The priests at Hamburgh, much disturbed and enraged against our Friends and them, do rail at and abuse them in print; endeavouring to incense the magistrates there by their lies and calumnies: but the magistrates do not gratify them, but rather discountenance them. Blessed be the Lord; whose power is at work in the hearts of many people.

The Friends yet remaining captives in Mequinez, are still held under great severities and hardships by that cruel tyrannical task-master, who is yet suffered cruelly to punish, wound, and kill poor captives at his pleasure. And all possible care of their redemption and relief is by this meeting still recommended to the Meeting for Sufferings, to continue their endeavours for the effecting thereof.

This meeting being acquainted that endeavours have been used for the relief of Friends in relation to oaths (pursuant to the last Yearly Meeting's advice in that case), and what progress was made in the House of Commons in order thereto, and before the committee of parliament; who, after a due hearing of Friends, drew up a fair report, and gave their opinion for our relief;

which nevertheless was lost by vote in the house; this meeting being sensible of the great care of the Meeting for Sufferings here in that case, many tenderly acknowledged Friends' labours and endeavours therein. And the meeting still leaves it to the said Meeting for Sufferings to continue their care and endeavours in that case, as the Lord shall please to make way for the general ease of Friends.

An account being given to this meeting, that several poor Friends have removed themselves and their families, from divers parts of the nation, to the city of London, who, soon after their coming, being not capable to subsist, have applied themselves to Friends there for relief, and have been very chargeable;

It is advised, that if any poor Friends for the time to come should incline to remove themselves and families to this city, that before they unsettle themselves, they apply themselves to the Monthly or Quarterly Meetings to which they belong, for advice and counsel; and that such meetings do rather advise them to be contented in their station and places, where provisions and accommodations may be easier and much cheaper obtained than at London. Or if permitted, by certificate from the counties, to remove, that then the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings from whence they come, do take care to supply their necessities, that the Friends of London be not overcharged for the future.

It is desired that the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings respectively take notice of all Friends' books, that are or may be sent to them, according to former agreement, and take care for the dispersing the same for the service of truth.

And also it is agreed that each Quarterly Meeting take care to advise the correspondents for the counties, and any others concerned, to write only to their correspondents in London about their sufferings, and not to other persons, lest their suffering case be delayed.

Friends appointed to view the accounts report, that they find they are truly stated and rightly kept. And Friends are again advised to bring up with them the total sum of each county's collection for the relief of Friends that suffered by the calamities in Ireland.

We are truly comforted and greatly refreshed in the Lord, by the weighty accounts given at this our solemn assembly from the respective counties in England and Wales, by the Friends sent up; as also by some epistles from several counties, importing the unity, love, peace and concord among Friends, and prosperity of the blessed truth, and increase of the government of Christ, and his peace in the church; in which we pray God to keep his people to the end.

To avoid contention and strife in all meetings, it is the advice and sense of this meeting;

1. That all Friends have a care of God's glory, and be tender thereof, as hath been often advised.

2. And to keep the authority of your meetings in the power of God, and unity of his blessed Spirit, whereby they were erected and settled; and continue your godly care and services therein, for those good ends for which they were first instituted.

3. And to keep all contention, personal reflections and sinings, out of your meetings; and keep down and out of all heats, and passions, and doubtful disputations.

4. Suffer no turbulent contentious quarrelsome spirit, or persons, to be concerned among you, in ordering your affairs; that they may be all managed in the peaceable tender spirit and wisdom of Christ Jesus.

5. Suffer no divisions, or schisms, or making parties among yourselves one against another. For they will greatly tend to weaken your meetings, and cause them to lose their power, and them and you to be slighted.

6. Both our men's and women's meetings, and our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, and Yearly Meetings, and Meetings for Sufferings, were set up in the wisdom, counsel, and tender love of God. And in the same peaceable wisdom to be kept and encouraged, for all those good ends for which they were intended and appointed.

7. All differences, happening in personal or temporal occasions, to be speedily ended; according to the advice given in our last yearly epistle. And if any doubtful point in law be in the case, then both parties may advise with some well-knowing in the law. For if any lust to be contentious, we have no such custom in the churches of Christ.

8. The Meeting for Sufferings is intrusted to take care of all sufferings of Friends for truth and conscience sake, as at first intended.

The six Friends of the city, appointed and intrusted this year with the accounts, are William Crouch, John Staploe, William Macket, William Chandler, William Beech, and Nathaniel Marks.

Our souls also were very deeply affected with the refreshing presence and counsel of the Lord our God attending this our Yearly Meeting; and the amicable and peaceable management of the affairs, and the blessed end and closure thereof; to the great consolation and satisfaction of Friends, and honour of his blessed truth, in which our unity stands. Blessed be the God of all our mercies for ever.

It is agreed that our Yearly Meeting be continued as hitherto, if the Lord will, being adjourned till the next year. And that Friends of each county send two faithful Friends to attend the service thereof, as formerly directed.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XVII—1694.

Dear and truly beloved Friends and brethren in Christ,

After the salutation of our very dear and tender love and brotherly affection, in that most precious life and divine power wherein our unity and living faith and safety consist, and which hath very eminently attended us in this our Yearly Meeting from first to last; for which we truly bless and praise the God of all our mercies, humbly beseeching him to continue his fatherly love and care towards you, and his whole heritage every where, and to preserve us all in faithfulness and diligence in the truth; that love, concord, and peace may be continued and increased more and more among us, and a tender and christian concern may come upon all in their respective stations, for the keeping of good order in the affairs of truth, in the unity of the spirit, and in the bond of peace;

The principle matters of concernment, agreed upon by this meeting to be communicated, are here recommended to your care and notice.

We understand by the several accounts from the counties, that there remain prisoners on truth's account, for tithes, &c. to the number of one hundred and thirty-two; and that since last year there have died eleven prisoners.

We do not think it necessary now to repeat to you all former advice given you in our late yearly epistles relating to truth's testimony; but refer you to the same, hoping you will put in practice all necessary and wholesome advice therein given; only remind you, that it is still desired that care be taken, when you send up your yearly accounts of sufferings for tithes, &c. that, as near as can be, you give account therewith, how much is taken in value, and how much it exceeds the pretended value, and by and for whom.

And Friends; remember to keep a true record of manifest judgments upon persecutors, and send up an account thereof,

with your sufferings, yearly. If any have been formerly omitted, fail not to send them; that the just judgments of God, in pleading the cause of the innocent sufferers, by signally punishing their persecutors, may be taken notice of, as a warning to posterity; as the heavy judgments and fearful ends of wicked persecutors are recorded in the Holy Scriptures and books of martyrs, &c.

It is also desired, that the several correspondents in the respective counties, when they hear the parliament is like to sit, may not fail sending up an account from each county where Friends are in prison, what alteration is therein relating to prisoners; if any addition of prisoners is made since this meeting; or whether any are discharged; and how many; that Friends may present a true account to the parliament, in case there be any occasion, in order for relief. Wherein, if timely care be taken by the correspondents, it will both prevent much trouble, charge, and loss of time, in sending letters from hence for that purpose.

Several epistles from foreign parts, as Bermudas, Nevis, Maryland, Pennsylvania, East and West Jersey, Dantzick, Amsterdam, Ireland and Scotland, were read; intimating that things were generally well relating to truth and Friends; and that in most parts Friends are in love and unity, and a good openness towards truth; though in some parts of America there is some breach in some measure yet remaining; which hath occasioned this meeting's being longer detained than usual, to hear and inspect the differences, in order to endeavour a composure and end thereof: for which this meeting hath tenderly laboured, under a great exercise and travail many days, for the blessed truth's sake, and honour of the worthy name of our God, and peace of his church and people; and accordingly hath given its sense and faithful advice and counsel for the parties concerned; leaving the issue of all to the Lord, and patiently waiting for the desired end.

We were well affected with the large accounts from Amsterdam, of the peace and unity amongst Friends, and prosperity of truth in those parts, especially at Twist and Horne; where of late our dear Friend John Clause, visiting those parts, found great openness and tenderness among the people; who desire to be visited, and salute Friends: and that in some places is found good openness among the MENNISTS (or Baptists) to hear Friends declare the truth.

We have also an account by a Friend from Hamburgh, that Friends there are at unity and peace in their meetings, and desire to be visited. And that there is a great openness amongst the people called PIETISTS; and that some of them continue under the reproach of being called QUAKERS. And by the same ac-

count we also understand the Lord is secretly at work in many there; and it is hoped the differences about religion, between the Lutheran magistrates and priests, may end in the farther discovery and breaking-forth of truth in those parts. And from Dantzick, that Friends at present are quiet and at liberty, and several people there are seeking after truth; and that they do exceedingly long that some Friends might come over from England to visit them.

Our dear ancient Friend and brother William Edmondson being here, together with divers other faithful Friends and brethren from Ireland, we were greatly refreshed in their visit; who signified, to our comfort, the great goodness of God to them in that kingdom, in granting them peace and great plenty; but, above all, in exalting his name and prospering his truth amongst them; and the great peace and unity amongst Friends there; and the good effect of their great care in the exercise of holy discipline, for the preservation of all professing truth, in the ancient pure way and path thereof. They desire that all Friends, who remove from any part of England and Wales into that kingdom, may have certificates from their respective Monthly Meetings to which they belong, that they may be informed of what repute they are as to truth and Friends; and also that no unnecessary and undue charge be brought upon Friends there.

We are affected with sorrow by the accounts from Bermudas and Nevis, of the pestilence and great mortality in those islands, and of the death of many Friends thereby. The Friends there who yet remain, with some who are lately convinced, signify their desire of epistles and visits from hence.

We are greatly comforted with the many living testimonies and accounts, out of the respective counties of England and Wales, of truth's prosperity, Friends in love, unity, and peace, and a great openness and increase in many parts. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

An account was given to this meeting of our dear and ancient brother George Fox's journal being printed, and to be disposed of by his executors, according to his will; in particular one to every Yearly and Quarterly Meeting of faithful Friends throughout the world.

The Friends appointed to inspect the accounts, report, they find them duly stated and well kept, and nothing wanting this year.

And to our great joy, we further signify to you, that the precious life, divine power, heavenly wisdom, and comfortable presence of the Lord, which hath attended us from the beginning; hath continued, to our great and mutual comfort, strengthening;

and encouragement, to the conclusion of this our meeting; for which we reverently bless the Lord's holy name; and with thankful hearts return praise to him, who hath been our strength and wisdom, and is the God of all our mercies, blessed for ever.

And in much love and unity this meeting closed; with agreement, that this our Yearly Meeting be continued as hitherto, if the Lord will. And that Friends of each county send at least two faithful Friends to attend the service thereof, as formerly directed.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XVIII—1695.

TO OUR DEAR AND TENDERLY BELOVED FRIENDS AND BRETHREN IN OUR BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST,

This our solemn Yearly Meeting sendeth greeting and salutation, in him who is our life, in whom our living union, peace and safety, for ever stand. Blessed, praised, and renowned be his most glorious power, and excellent name; to whom be glory and dominion, in and over his whole church and heritage, for ever and ever.

We (being really persuaded you are not insensible that the good and blessed intent and end of this, and all our assemblies, is, with the Lord's assistance, for his honour, in the promoting and maintaining of our christian society and religion, in life and practice, in all the parts and branches thereof) do not esteem it necessary frequently and expressly to remind you of all particulars thereof; we therefore refer you chiefly to the faithful witness of God, and his truth, in your own hearts, for the renewing and continuance of your godly care and concurrence, for the more effectual practice and performance of those weighty matters and things, heretofore, and now, in the love of God recommended to you.

Many living and weighty accounts were given to this meeting, from the several counties in England and Wales, of the prevalency and prosperity of the blessed truth, and progress of the Lord's work, and the unity, peace and concord, and increase of love, among Friends; together with the great convincement, openness, and preparation, in many people and places, to receive the truth in the love of it: as also of the addition of several meetings,

and meeting-houses in some places, and Friends' true zeal and care therein : all which were to the great satisfaction and comfort of this meeting.

And this meeting desires and hopes, that you whom the Lord hath gifted with a public testimony for his name and truth, will, in this day of liberty, be diligent to visit the heritage of God in their meetings; and more especially those least frequented.

And from some foreign parts; as, in America, from Long-Island and Rhode-Island; and in Europe, from Holland, Ireland and Scotland; we have also received good accounts.

But we have not had particular advice directed to this meeting of the late differences in some parts of America; but hope things are better there than they have been; yet the sense, christian advice and counsel, given by our last Yearly Meeting to G. K. &c. having been openly slighted and opposed by him in print and otherwise, and he (manifesting himself to be gone out of the peaceable spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to continue in the same spirit of discord and opposition, whereby he hath given great trouble and sorrow to the church of Christ, and particularly to the last Yearly Meeting, and this also) is further testified against, until he unfeignedly repent, and be reconciled to faithful Friends and brethren; which, for his soul's sake, we sincerely desire.

From Amsterdam, by an epistle, we received account that Friends are in peace and quiet, and meetings kept up, and great resort thereto in that city: and that there is an openness to truth in North-Holland, Friesland, Embden, and Frederickstadt. Our dear Friends and brethren James Fletcher, Heskin Fell, and Roger Haydock, are going for Holland in truth's service.

This meeting having account of the present low and indigent condition of those poor Friends in the Isle of Man, and those at Dantzick and Embden, have ordered them some supply for their relief.

We understand, by several accounts from the counties this year, that there remain prisoners on truth's account for tithes, &c. to the number of one hundred and thirty-four Friends; whose case being lately presented, and opened to the king, by some Friends from the Meeting for Sufferings, had a favourable reception and resentment. Since which, the act of general and free pardon being come forth, it is hoped that many Friends, who are prisoners on contempts, may receive relief thereby, on improvement thereof, by duly moving the judges and courts thereupon; which you are desired not to omit.

And it is desired, that the accounts of faithful Friends' sufferings for the testimony of Christ Jesus in this gospel day, on all accounts, be truly stated and kept on record; and also in due

time called for, and carefully examined, by appointment of some knowing Friends from the Quarterly Meeting; that they be sent up in due order and time, together with true copies of the warrants, writs or processes of commitments, attested by the gaolers.

And remember the last Yearly Meeting's advice, to keep true records of manifest judgments upon persecutors, and send up accounts thereof, with your sufferings (as some have already done,) for a warning to posterity. And be sure they be well attested. And it is requisite to recommend to the several Quarterly Meetings, to take care that timely application be made in their respective counties (by some sober discreet Friends,) to members of parliament, before their coming up to sit; giving them right information, and intreating them, that, in their places, they would be pleased to use their endeavours and interest for the ease of our suffering Friends (as aforesaid) when presented to them in parliament. This method having been found of service in some places, it is desired it may be observed.

And it is desired, and we judge it meet to remind you, that all Friends that are or may be concerned, take especial care, in the name of the Lord, and for his truth's sake, for the good education and order of Friends' children in God's holy fear, in the way of truth, for their preservation out of the snares of the enemy, and corruptions of the world. And also to see that schools, and school-masters who are faithful Friends, and well qualified, be placed and encouraged in all counties, cities, great towns, or places where there may be need. And that such school-masters (as much as may be) sometimes correspond with one another, for their help and improvement in such good and easy methods as are most agreeable to the truth, and the children's advantage and benefit. And that care be taken that poor Friends' children may freely partake of such education, in order to apprenticeship.

And that all diligence, care, and caution be had, that no Friend or Friends' children be betrayed in affection, or otherwise, nor join in marriage, with those that are not of our christian profession and society; nor without the privity and consent of parents, guardians, or lawful tutors intrusted with them; nor with any near kindred, contrary to the law of God, and wholesome advice already given them; particularly by a Yearly Meeting epistle, 1675; and otherwise, by the faithful servants of Christ.

And that care be taken to advise and stir up all Friends, that have estates to dispose of, to make due, timely, firm and lawful settlement thereof by will, or otherwise, to prevent future trouble and discord, as heretofore advised. Making such wills in due time will shorten no man's days: but the omission or delay

thereof has proved very pernicious to many, and injurious to truth.

And Friends; let those just and ancient commands of God be observed; viz. LEV. xix. 16. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people." And EXOD. xxiii. 1. "Thou shalt not raise a false report." And PSAL. xv. 3. "He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour, &c." it is only such innocent ones that shall abide in the Lord's tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill. Wherefore in the fear of the Lord stand against all whisperers, backbiters, tale-bearers, defamers, and slanderers; and against all whisperings, backbitings, tale-bearing, reproaching and slandering, and put a speedy stop thereto, as much as in you lies. For such works of darkness and envy tend to division and discord; and the righteous law of God goes against both the authors, fomenters, receivers, and encouragers thereof. See PROV. xi. 13. and xviii. 8. and xxvi. 22. and xx. 19. and xxvi. 20. and also 2 COR. xii. 20.

It is advised for the service of truth, and some ease to Friends concerned in the printing, that it be recommended to each Monthly Meeting in the counties, to take off two books of a sort, as they are newly printed (under two shillings six pence price each), for one year from this time; and one of a sort to a Monthly Meeting, that is above that price; viz. such good books as truth and Friends allow and approve of: and that they be sent into the counties quarterly, about two or three weeks before the quarter-day, by those Friends that print them. And where Friends have occasion for a greater number, they may send to the printers for them, keeping one for each Quarterly Meeting.

The Friends of the counties appointed to inspect the accounts, report, they have thoroughly viewed them, and find them truly stated, to their satisfaction: and that they judge there will be no want this year.

Now dear Friends and brethren; as we are called and gathered by the Lord's glorious arm and power to be a people of one heart and one way, and to walk before him in true love and unity, in the peaceable spirit of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ (who is our life, our strength, and safety) stand therein against the enemy, the son of perdition, the spirit of anti-christ and division, and against all the evil designs and attempts thereof. Wherefore in the same spirit of love and unity keep in peace and concord; and in godly fear and humility be watchful against the enemy's attempts and assaults on all hands, which will be to the weakening and frustrating thereof. And all be faithful and humbly thankful to our God for all his mercies, and for the present liberty, and blessed

opportunities we do enjoy; whose refreshing presence, power and counsel, have greatly attended this our meeting as at other times. And hitherto the Lord has helped, strengthened and confirmed us, to our mutual comfort; to his praise and renown be it confessed and remembered. And to the Lord our God, and the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne, be glory, honour and dominion, for ever and ever.

And in the deep sense of the love of God, and unity of his blessed Spirit, this meeting concluded for this year, with the wonted agreement that this our Yearly Meeting be continued, if the Lord please. And that Friends of each county send at least two faithful Friends to attend the service of truth and Friends, as formerly.

Signed in behalf of our said meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XIX—1696.

TO OUR DEAR AND FAITHFUL FRIENDS AND BRETHREN IN THE
BLESSED AND EVER-LIVING TRUTH,

After tender salutation in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ unto you all, we hereby intimate, that we are greatly satisfied and comforted in the living sense of the continuance of the great love and care of our heavenly father towards us, his whole heritage and people; and in the great progress and prosperity of the powerful truth and kingdom of Christ; according to the many good accounts we have had at this meeting, from the several counties of England and Wales, and by divers epistles from foreign parts; as Barbadoes, Maryland, West-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Bermudas, Antigua, Holland, Ireland, and Scotland; and that the late differences which have been in some parts of America, are very much abated. For which, and for all the mercies we enjoy, we are deeply obliged to be humbly thankful to the Lord our God; and earnestly desire that all Friends may live in love and peace, in a true and diligent improvement thereof; that christianity in life and conversation may shine among us, and be promoted by us.

And dear Friends; shun all occasions of strife and discord, and take care to make a speedy end of all differences, that are or may happen among yourselves, as hath often been advised, and that according to the holy apostle's doctrine. Read 1 COR. vi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. And let all your affairs be managed in your

meetings in the peaceable wisdom and spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ; not striving, but bearing one with and for another; that the power of Christ may rest upon you, and rule in all your assemblies.

We also desire Friends every where (according to our ancient principle and practice) to live inoffensively and thankfully towards the government, which we have found favourable towards us, for our relief on several accounts (divers Friends having expressed their sense thereof in this meeting, for the ease and relief already received); and which we are in hopes will continue to be so, for our farther ease.

We have received account, that fourscore and seventeen Friends have been discharged from imprisonment by the late act of pardon; and that there are now prisoners fifty-two.

It is further desired, that such among Friends as are endowed with plenty of outward substance, be timely and tenderly advised to do good therewith, in their day and generation; especially with regard to the poor; that the tokens of your charity may commend your memorial, and be good precedents to generations to come.

And dear Friends; as the love and service of our great and good God have brought us together on this occasion, in which we have been abundantly comforted and encouraged to continue the assembling ourselves together after this blessed manner; so we cannot but recommend to you the holding up the holy testimony of truth, which hath made us a people to God, and preserved us so unto this day, and that in all the parts of it. For truth is one, and changes not; and what it convinced us of to be evil in the beginning, it reproves still: and therefore, dear Friends be zealous and strict for the Lord's blessed testimony in yourselves, in your families, and in your commerce among men; that so it may be seen we are a people kept through faith unto salvation by the Lord.

And more particularly, we recommend to you that are parents, the plainness and holy discipline of the truth among your children, that they may be trained up in truth's way (and with a commendable education) according to your abilities; that a peculiar people we may be in the life of righteousness, in our generation, diligently improving that good understanding, and those heavenly gifts the Lord hath endued you with, and made you stewards of, to the honour of him that hath called you, and the good and comfort one of another; and then there will be less need to enlarge to you by way of epistle.

So in true and tender love we commit you to the Lord, and to

his blessed conduct in all things, who is able to preserve us faithful to the end.

This meeting having been comforted together, and the business gone through; it is agreed to continue this meeting, as formerly, the next year, if the Lord will. And to that time it is adjourned.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XX—1697.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the dear and tender love of our heavenly Father we sincerely salute you, heartily wishing your prosperity in the same love, unity, concord, and peace, which this our solemn yearly assembly has deeply and in an extraordinary manner travailed and supplicated the Lord our God for, that the same love, unity, and peace in Christ Jesus, may be continued and increased in all his churches; we having livingly tasted of the sweetness thereof, fervently desire that you all may be like-minded, and one with us in your fervent prayers to Almighty God, and your christian care and endeavours in all your respective meetings and concerns for the glory of our God, and good of his whole heritage.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

Our peace, our strength, health and comfort in our Lord Jesus Christ, stand in true love, and unity of the spirit and bond of peace, wherein the pure life and zeal for the glory of God, and prosperity of the blessed truth, is kept up. Wherefore we tenderly intreat you to watchfulness and diligence in the light, against all disorder, provocations, and causes of discord, strife, contention, and division, and that evil spirit which is the author thereof, both in public and private.

By several epistles from foreign parts, as from Jamaica, Antigua, Carolina, Amsterdam, Bermudas, Scotland and Ireland, as well as by verbal accounts from England and Wales, we understand that truth spreads and prospers, and the Lord's work goes on, and that there is an openness and conviction in many places, and divers raised up to bear public testimony for the truth, and a good unity and harmony among Friends.

But Friends at Dantzick are under sufferings for not bearing arms; and in Scotland, by being kept out of their meeting-house at Edinburgh.

And in Barbary there remain several captives, most of whom

are such that have received the truth in the time of their captivity; the ransom of whom could not hitherto be obtained, although great endeavours have been used for it; but farther endeavours are intended to be used as opportunity presents.

And although we understand that divers Friends in England have been discharged since the last year, there remain forty-four prisoners, mostly on account of tithes.

It is the advice of this meeting, that Friends every where keep to plainness both in speech, habit and dealing; and not to launch too far into the things of this world, by over-charging themselves with trading and debts beyond their abilities to discharge; but keep out of the spirit of the world in all things, that none may be ensnared and defiled thereby, as hath been advised in former epistles, particularly in 1692. And that all Friends keep to the simplicity of truth, and our ancient testimony in calling the months and days by scripture names, and not by heathen; and all other things, against which truth's testimony hath been borne: and duly to keep up your Week-day Meetings; and that the respective Monthly and Quarterly Meetings do appoint some faithful Friends to inquire into the due observation thereof.

And also to see and take care, that in all places, where schools are set up for the teaching of Friends' children, the masters be diligent to improve and forward their scholars in learning, and keep them out of every thing that would corrupt good manners. And that care be taken in your several Monthly and Quarterly Meetings to keep up our christian order and religious discipline in the church; that all disorder and looseness may be prevented, according to advice formerly given; and that charity be promoted.

We do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, warn and charge all that profess the truth among us, to take heed and beware of covetousness, over-reaching, oppressing and defrauding of any; from whence strife, contention and law-suits do often arise. And if any differences about these things do happen among any of you, to stop and suppress them.

And now, dear Friends, to conclude this our yearly epistle to you, we have no new thing to say to you, but that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen, and which our hands have handled, of the word of life, by which we were quickened and redeemed from the world and its pollutions, and all its corrupt and evil ways, to be a peculiar people to the Lord, in the light and life of righteousness. Unto which blessed word we commit and commend you to be supplied and preserved to the end; whereby you may add to your faith, that has been begotten thereby, virtue; and to your virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; to temperance patience; to patience

godliness; to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity: for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him, that loved and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever. This meeting is adjourned till next year, as usually.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXI—1698.

DEAR AND WELL BELOVED FRIENDS AND BRETHREN IN THE
BLESSED UNCHANGEABLE TRUTH,

We dearly salute you all in the inexpressible love of our God in Christ Jesus our Lord, which is plentifully extended to us, and shed abroad in our hearts, and wherewith he has eminently blessed this our solemn assembly. Praise, honour, and glory be to his renowned name and power. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

The true intent and blessed end of this our Annual Meeting being for the increase and continuance of christian love, unity, and good order in Christ Jesus, among all Friends of truth (which ought to be the sincere endeavours of all who own and profess the same holy truth with us), in the same love we recommend unto you these following matters and things.

And first; we give you to understand, that although several Friends have been discharged since the last Yearly Meeting, yet there still remain prisoners (and mostly on the account of tithes) thirty-four. Which being at present the most pressing suffering, we remind you of our ancient christian testimony, and repeated advice that it be faithfully maintained and kept up in all the parts of it; and that it may not be avoided and shunned by any indirect ways or courses with landlords, or otherwise. And that you be careful to keep a true record of the value of what is taken from you on that account, in the field, or otherwise, whether it exceeds the demand or not; with the respective date of each suffering, and the time when any suit is commenced.

And to the end that effectual care be taken in these and all other cases wherein the testimony of truth is concerned, we advise you to appoint some faithful Friends of your respective meet-

ings to see how well these things are observed; and tenderly to admonish such, in brotherly love, that shall decline the same.

We also understand that divers of our Friends, who were captives at Mequinez, and suffered great hardship there, are dead. And there yet remain five; for whose ransom great endeavours have been used, but it is not yet effected.

And it hath been matter of great comfort and joy to us (which we also believe it will be to you) to understand by the Friends that came up to this Yearly Meeting from the several counties in England and Wales, as well as by the epistles from divers parts beyond the sea; viz. Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Jersey, Maryland, Barbadoes, Bermudas, Jamaica, and Long Island, which most generally give account truth spreads and prospers, and is in good esteem, and many sober people inquire after it in many places; and Friends generally are preserved in love and unity, and watchfulness against the spirit of looseness and separation. Blessed be the God of love and peace for this and all his manifold mercies.

Howbeit, dear Friends, we are sorrowfully affected with the straights and hardships which our Friends and brethren in the kingdom of Scotland deeply partake of in the common calamity, which sorely afflicts the nothern parts of that nation, by reason of the failing of their crops for these three years last past, which hath occasioned a great scarcity of bread to some hundreds there: the consideration whereof engages us to recommend to you their distressed conditions; hoping and believing the Lord will open your hearts, in a sympathizing spirit of brotherly love and christian compassion, cheerfully and freely to administer to their great and pressing necessities. And inasmuch as there are other occasions for some supplies to some poor Friends beyond the seas at Dantzick and Embden, as well as for other general and necessary services of truth; we therefore recommend to you, that a collection be made in your respective meetings, and Friends stirred up to be open-hearted on this occasion; there having been no collection made of this kind for seven years last past; and what was then collected being all expended, and considerable sums besides, as we understand by those Friends that were appointed to examine the accounts.

And it is farther desired that Friends be careful and expeditious in sending up what money shall be so collected to John Harwood, Richard Diamond, John Knight, Henry Gouldney, Robert Ruddle, Francis Plumsted, or some of them; and to give advice thereof by letter to your several correspondents here, to be communicated to the Meeting for Sufferings.

And now, dear Friends; not thinking it needful to renew our

often-repeated advices to keep out of the evil ways, fashions, and customs which the spirit of the world leads into; we recommend you to the Lord, and to the word of his grace; which is able to prosper and build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified; and will keep and preserve you, as you sincerely mind and obey it, in love, peace, and unity one with another, and watchful against that spirit which would lead into indifferency, slackness or dullness in going to meetings, and in waiting upon the Lord therein; and which would sow discord, and make divisions, parties, or breaches, to the scandal of the church of Christ.

And we beseech you therefore, in the fear of the Lord, that ye will exercise a watchful and tender care over the weak among you, that they may not be hurt, or drawn away thereby.

So in dear love we conclude with the exhortation of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." MARK ix. 50.

And having had a comfortable season together, and the good presence of the Lord among us, in the sense of his goodness, with thankfulness for the same, this meeting adjourns to this time twelvemonth, if it please the Lord to give us an opportunity.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXII—1699.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the renewed love of our Lord Jesus Christ, our holy head and heavenly lawgiver, we dearly salute you; wishing you a plentiful increase of all spiritual blessings in him, who, according to his wonted goodness, hath, through his divine providence, afforded us a peaceable and comfortable season: so that notwithstanding the rage and enmity of restless apostates, and some others, who have grossly misrepresented us; yet hath this our meeting been kept, as usually, in the name, power, love, and spirit, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as, in the sense thereof, we have been under a godly concern to exhort one another to abide therein, and to persevere in faithfulness and sincerity in our ancient and christian testimony, in all the several parts thereof; so we tenderly exhort you in the love of God, in your respective meetings, to take effectual care therein, that all may be so preserved to the end.

And dear Friends; we hereby give you to understand, that we

have received accounts, as well by the Friends that came up to this Yearly Meeting, from the several counties in England and Wales, as by epistles from divers foreign parts (viz. from Ireland, Scotland, Holland, Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, Rhode-Island, Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Jamaica, &c.) that truth spreads and prospers; that Friends grow up, and are preserved in love and unity therein; that many sober people, both in this and other countries, resort to Friends' meetings; and that the Lord hath of late raised up and sent forth divers of his servants, in the spirit of his Son, to labour in the work of the ministry, for the gathering into, and building up in, the way of truth and holiness: which accounts, as they were cause of great comfort and joy to us, so we gladly impart the same to you, that you may partake with us therein; and both you and we may jointly return thanksgiving and praises to the Lord our God therefore.

The deep sufferings of many in Scotland, by reason of a great scarcity of corn, heretofore intimated, have been considered by Friends, as desired last year, to the great relief of the poor Friends there; whose acknowledgments of Friends' love and care therein have gratefully been presented to this meeting. And the scarcity still continuing, and rather increasing, a farther assistance is intended to be continued, till we see how the Lord will be pleased to do with them, as to a plentiful harvest or otherwise.

Earnest endeavours have again lately been used for the liberty of our Friends, captives in Barbary, though not as yet obtained; and there being at this time some negociations on foot, by the tenderness and care of the government, for the redemption of all the English there; and though the persons in Barbary, employed therein by Friends, do wait some time to see the effect of that; yet we shall continue our farther endeavours for their discharge. And in the mean time have and do take care to send them supplies for food; they having little allowance in that country of any thing to support their bodies, under the great severities of labour, and undeserved stripes that captives often endure. Also farther direction by this meeting is given on their behalf.

And let all Friends be exhorted to abide under the daily cross; whereby the earthly mind may be crucified, which hath its delights and ease in vanity, pride, covetousness, &c. That Friends being preserved out of those things wherein the enemy hath had, and has, his kingdom (and too plainly lays his snares to hinder their holy progress), may every where be more and more a retired, serious, plain and self-denying people; growing in the grace and knowledge of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and exalting his spiritual kingdom in their souls.

And because our comfort, as a people, depends upon our care

to maintain peace and fellowship amongst brethren, in all our services we earnestly recommend an humble and condescending frame of spirit unto all; that with godly fear, wisdom and meekness, we may be so ordered in all our respective services, that every high and rough thing may be laid low, and all occasion of striving be prevented, and the peace of the church of Christ preserved and augmented among us: and to that purpose it is tenderly advised, that we diligently and carefully observe the comely and blessed gospel order, so long known and in practice among us, in the spirit of meekness and a sound mind; which is the way to crush all differences in their infancy, and suppress the rise, as well as stop the progress, of every thing that is unseemly, and inconsistent with the testimony of the precious truth.

We have an account, that since last year fourteen Friends are discharged from imprisonment; yet there are remaining thirty-seven Friends prisoners, mostly on account of tithes.

And lastly: God having hitherto blessed and eminently preserved his heritage, and lifted up his countenance upon us and our solemn assemblies; let it be the earnest supplication and breathing of our souls to him, that we may ever be preserved a faithful and innocent people, following those things which make for peace, and the completing of that universal spiritual union and fellowship in Christ Jesus our Lord, which as a peculiar people, we are called unto by his grace; that the God of peace may ever be with us, and his mercies and blessings continued.

And this meeting (having had a peaceable and comfortable season together, in the enjoyment of the Lord's presence, in the sense of his great love and goodness to us, and care and providence over us) adjourns till the usual time next year, in this city.

Signed on behalf, and by direction, of this Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXIII—1700.

Dear and well-beloved Friends and Brethren in Christ Jesus,

We tenderly salute you in his dear love and life, whereby we were made alive unto him, and hitherto helped and preserved, to be a peculiar people to his praise and glory, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. Blessed be his glorious name and power for ever.

And as his living presence and word of life, hath been felt among us, to our edification and comfort, in these our solemn as-

semblies; our souls' fervent desire is, that you may enjoy and partake of the same in all your assemblies, to engage and to confirm you in faithfulness to the end, that a crown of righteousness and glory you may inherit for ever.

The things following are, in true brotherly love, briefly recommended to you, for your information, concerning truth's progress and prosperity; as also, for your tender consideration and christian care.

This meeting hath had divers good accounts from the several counties both in England and Wales, as also by epistles from Friends in foreign parts (as Scotland, Ireland, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode-Island, Bermudas and Holland), importing the prosperity of truth, and increase of Christ's government and peace, of which there shall be no end: howbeit, that our Friends at Dantzick are under sufferings for truth and their testimony thereto; and our Friends at Frederickstadt under some hardships, and their lives have been under apparent dangers, occasioned by the war in those parts; for whose relief care is taken, as occasion shall require.

Friends' care is also continued for the redemption of our Friends that are captives in Barbary; and (as was hoped) the king has now agreed for the ransom of all the English captives there; and agents are arrived from thence, in order to receive the said ransom. And although now, as heretofore, Friends have acquainted the government that they intend to redeem our Friends at our own charge, nevertheless Friends are so far willing to encourage a public collection for the said service, that when the collectors shall come with the briefs to Friends' houses, we hope Friends will be inclined to extend their charity, in common with their neighbours, towards the redemption of the other English captives.

Concerning the present sufferings of Friends in this nation: First, by imprisonments:....Notwithstanding ten have been discharged since last year, forty remain prisoners, mostly for tithes, by priests and impropiators. Secondly, by goods taken away:.... The accounts now received amount to above 4700*l*. most of which is on the account of tithes. And as we have formerly advised that you keep exact and true accounts of all your sufferings for conscience sake, both by distresses, sequestrations, and imprisonments, that we may be capable to give a true account thereof to the government, when necessity requires; and also that care be taken to give speedy account when any Friends are discharged from imprisonments, or proceedings against them stopped, and how, and by what means (the want of which hath given much

needless trouble to Friends here); so we intreat you to be more careful therein for the time to come.

Also it is the earnest desire of this meeting, for the Lord's sake, the honour of his name and truth, and the good of our posterity, that a godly care be taken by you for the due education of Friends' children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in plain and modest apparel, and in truth's language, as becometh our holy profession and christian religion. And that all parents be good examples to them accordingly, and prevent and restrain them from the pride of life and corruptions of the world, as much as in them lies.

Finally, dear Friends, keep all your meetings (as well those for good order, charity, and christian discipline, as those set apart intirely for the worship of God) in his love, and in the name, power, and peaceable spirit of his dear Son Jesus Christ, which is the alone true authority of all our meetings; for "without him we can do nothing." And in his blessed power stand fast in righteous judgment over all unruly and disorderly spirits, that would break in upon the good order and discipline settled amongst us; as well as over all those that seek to lay waste the testimony of truth, and cause the offence of the cross to cease.

And we beseech you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for his sake, as his family and house, let his peaceable wisdom and spirit bear sway in and among you all, and in all your meetings. And let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but let all things be done without murmuring and disputings. And all live in love and peace; be of one mind and one accord, and the God of love and peace will be with you, and bless you in your christian care and service of love one towards another, for his holy name and blessed truth's sake.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXIV—1701.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the love of God, which we have in Christ Jesus, we dearly salute you; and desire the sense of his goodness to us until this day, may be continued unto the end to his whole heritage.

We greatly rejoice to hear of your affairs relating to truth's prosperity, and that love, peace and unity, are continued and increased amongst you; as also in the godly concern, and christian

care, that is upon the spirits of faithful Friends one towards another; and keeping to truth's testimony in all respects, and particularly in that part for which many chiefly suffer; blessing the Lord, that he hath given them not only to believe, but also to suffer for his name and truth's sake.

And if any weakness, shortness, failure or unfaithfulness appear in any professing the same truth with us, we hope faithful Friends and brethren will continue their christian care for their help, instruction and admonition, in the love and power of the Lord, as in his wisdom they shall see cause; still aiming at their good, their inward peace of conscience, and salvation in Christ Jesus.

The relation we have received by divers epistles from foreign parts, of truth's prosperity, and the faithfulness of Friends therein (viz. from Ireland, Scotland, West-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode-Island, Carolina, Virginia, Jamaica, Antigua, Maryland, Barbadoes, Bermudas, and Holland) was very acceptable unto us.

And we have an account, from divers parts, of Friends' great sufferings in England and Wales, to the value of above 5000*l.* since the last year's account; and there are still continued thirty-seven Friends prisoners, although there have been thirteen discharged since the last Yearly Meeting. And the sundry sufferings do appear to be mostly on the claim of tithes; and divers of them by the old destructive course of proceeding to excommunication, imprisonments, and sequestrations; notwithstanding the sundry late acts (declared to be) "For the more easy recovery, &c." Which severe proceedings Friends may tenderly acquaint the bishops and civil magistrates of.

Our testimony against tithes and forced maintenance in this gospel day, being received from Christ, our head and high priest, is not of our own making or imposing, nor from the tradition of men; but what we have from him, by whose divine power we were raised up to be a people, and by which we have been preserved to this day; knowing that his ministry and gospel are free, according to his own express command, "freely ye have received; freely give."

The Friends that are in captivity in Barbary are duly taken care of by Friends. And their ransom, having been agreed for some time, it is hoped will shortly be effected. One young man has been convinced there lately.

As we are truly comforted to hear of Friends godly care for the good education of their children in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord, in sobriety, modesty, and plainness of habit and speech; so it is earnestly desired that the same care may be continued and universally increased and put in practice; and, as

cause shall appear, to stir up all concerned faithfully to discharge their duty therein, as in the sight of God.

And as we are glad to hear of Friends' care, in making due provision for the education of their children in necessary learning; so it is desired that no poor Friend's children may want any such learning.

We sincerely desire all Friends to dwell in brotherly love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace: and according to the ancient apostolical exhortation, "let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ:" that we may so hear of your affairs, as that ye stand in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel; that in the unity thereof all may be so preserved, that none of you may be carried away with any wind of doctrine, by the slights of men, and cunning craftiness; whose designs the Lord has greatly disappointed, yet do they still lie in wait to deceive. Therefore let your tender care be exercised towards them that are but weak in the faith, to strengthen and encourage them against that apostate spirit which would scatter and draw back to perdition.

So heartily wishing and desiring that all may persevere in the blessed truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we humbly pray God that his grace and peace may be with you all unto the end.

We have great cause to be humbly thankful to the God of all our mercies, for that present ease and liberty we enjoy through the favour of the government; and the comfortable enjoyment of the Lord's blessed presence, which has been largely manifested with us in this our solemn assembly, and is an encouragement to us to continue this our Yearly Meeting; which is agreed to meet again at the usual time, if the Lord see good.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXV—1702.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

The salutation of our dear and ancient love in the fellowship of the blessed gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our heavenly head, which he hath visited us with, to the opening of our understandings, and quickening of our hearts to serve him in our generation, reaches unto you his churches and people where ever settled, all over the world; desiring that grace, mercy, and peace, fear, love, and obedience, may increase and abound among

you, to the glory of God, the unity of his church, and your mutual edification and comfort in the Lord.

According to our accustomed manner, we have held our General Meeting in this city, at the usual time; wherein divers matters came before us, and under our consideration, relating to our religious society, which we have thought fit to communicate to you as followeth:

That from those Friends that came up to this meeting from the several counties of England and Wales; as also by several epistles from foreign parts (*viz.* Bermudas, Pennsylvania, Jamaica, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, North Carolina, Holland, Scotland, and Ireland,) we have received accounts that great love and unity is among Friends, and truth prospers and spreads in many places; which was very comfortable to us; and we greatly desire the same may be abundantly increased and multiplied amongst you.

We understand also, that although since the last Yearly Meeting fifteen Friends have been discharged from their imprisonments, there yet remain prisoners in divers parts of England seven-and-thirty Friends, mostly on the account of tithes; and that sufferings on the same account amount to more than four thousand five hundred pounds; although some other sufferings of the same nature are not yet finished.

And whereas we formerly gave you some account of the hopes Friends had, and endeavours used, for the redemption of Friends, captives in Barbary; we now let you know, that John King, Richard Robertson, Thomas Walkedon, Robert Finley, James Burgoine, Joseph Bigland (being all of our Friends who remained alive in that long and sore captivity,) have been this year redeemed; whose ransom hath cost Friends upwards of 480*l.* including one George Palmer, a Friend's son of Pennsylvania recommended from thence; towards whose ransom they also did contribute. Divers of which redeemed Friends have tenderly and gratefully acknowledged Friends' love and care of them.

And there having been also of late considerable disbursements for assistance of suffering and necessitous Friends, so that the former collection, that was made for the general service of Friends, is now wholly expended; it is therefore tenderly desired, that a voluntary and charitable contribution may be made in the several meetings concerned; and what shall be so collected we desire may be sent up to Tobias Collet, Richard Hawkins, Peter Briggins, John Freame, Samuel Waldenfield, and Roger Newham, or some of them.

And since the books of adversaries are industriously spread in many parts of the nation, for the aspersing ancient Friends, and

defaming our true christian doctrines ; it is therefore desired that Friends, in their several Monthly Meetings, will appoint some judicious Friends to read over such answers as have been or may be written, to clear truth from their injurious calumnies ; that Friends thereby understanding the controversy, and the falseness of our adversaries' accusations, may be the better able to vindicate truth and Friends, as occasion may be offered ; and, if the service shall so require, to send for more than the common proportion of answers, to disperse among Friends or neighbours where need shall appear.

We earnestly desire, that all professing the blessed truth with us, be very careful to keep their words and promises, by paying their just debts without unreasonable delay ; and do justice to all men, for righteousness sake, and to prevent the great reproach and scandal of defrauding any persons, by breaking in their debt, or otherwise injuring any. And where it shall happen any differences may arise, to shun going to law one with another ; but that such differences may be justly and speedily ended, according to advice formerly given in this behalf.

And dear Friends and brethren ; although we have not been altogether free from some exercises, yet our gracious and tender Father hath, at this our solemn meeting, highly favoured us with his power and refreshing presence ; which hath deeply affected and closely united the hearts of Friends in the bond of peace and love ; which the enemy of all truth and righteousness has often, but in vain, attempted to break. And that all such attempts may always prove vain, we earnestly beseech Friends every where to keep in that love and humility in which our unity and fellowship will be always dear and valuable : that so, when it shall please the Lord to give Friends opportunity to meet again (which we hope will be at the same time the next year, to which this meeting doth now adjourn), we may have a sense of one another in the same divine love and life in which we part.

Signed by appointment of this Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXVI—1703.

Dear and well-beloved Friends and Brethren,

Who are sanctified and preserved in Christ Jesus, grace and peace be increased and multiplied unto you all. We tenderly salute you, as partakers with us in the spirit of love and life ;

even in him who laid down his life for us, and is come in spirit and power in our day, that we might have and possess life eternal by him; heartily desiring, and breathing in our souls, that his Sion may prosper, and shine more and more in the beauty of holiness; that therein his Jerusalem may be a city without breaches, and so become the praise of the whole earth. For which blessed end, all Friends ought diligently to labour to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of lasting peace.

Dear Friends,

We do, with real comfort in the Lord, intimate to you, that this our Yearly Meeting, through his divine goodness, in divers weighty concerns, hath been of very great and eminent service, to the comfort of Friends in truth; and the good effects thereof we hope will remain to posterity.

We farther give you to understand, that we have received divers good and comfortable accounts, both by our Friends that came to this Yearly Meeting from other nations, and by epistles from foreign parts (as from Barbadoes, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Long-Island, Holland, Scotland, and Ireland) of truth's prosperity, and the increase of love and unity, and great openness among the people to hear truth's testimony; and we have also comfortable accounts, from many of the several counties, of the godly care, zeal, and faithfulness of Friends in their christian testimony; and that Friends generally are in love and unity, and truth prospers among them.

We therefore tenderly recommend unto faithful Friends and elders especially, to watch over the flock of Christ in their respective places; that they faithfully and diligently walk up to the testimony of the blessed truth, to which the Lord hath gathered us in this latter age of the world: that so, where any are found weak or faulty, they may be admonished and sought in the spirit of love (which is that of the gospel); that divine charity, that draws us with the cords of a man; wherein mercy is not only mixt with judgment, but may appear over all our works; so that it may be seen to all, that church-love abounds, before church-censure comes; and that a gospel spirit is the spring and motive to all our performances, as well in discipline as worship.

And dear Friends; our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings being set up and established by the power and in the wisdom of God (which is the authority of those meetings), all Friends are tenderly desired and advised carefully to keep to and in that authority, and therein manage all the business and affairs of the said meetings, in discharge of their duty to God and his church; and not expect or depend' upon this meeting for particular direction, from time to time, how they shall proceed in the management of

the concerns of those meetings, relating to truth's testimony and service: but wait for, and depend upon, the power and wisdom of God, for counsel and direction in such matters and cases as may come before them; which will be to the great ease of this meeting, and dispatch of the proper concerns thereof. And let the man's part, and natural wisdom and attainments, be subject to the spirit and power of God, which will truly edify the body in love, righteousness and peace. And if any decline from, or let fall, any branch of their testimony, that such may, in the wisdom and authority of truth, be dealt with; and therein mercy and judgment exercised in their proper places.

And that all Friends be weighty and circumspect in their conduct and management of their outward affairs, and careful to keep within the compass of their own substance, to prevent failures and breaches: and to avoid all indirect and unwarrantable methods, both in trade and merchandize, by which the government may be defrauded of its due; that so no reproach may be brought upon our holy profession by such things.

The chief sufferings Friends at present remain under, are, that of tithes, and those called church-rates; on which accounts five have died prisoners, seventeen have been discharged, and forty-three remain prisoners, since the last year's account. And we find the value of what our Friends have suffered on these accounts this last year, amounts unto above 4200*l*. And several Friends are under prosecution in the exchequer and ecclesiastical courts, on the said accounts. However, we desire and hope such severities will not weaken the faith of any, nor discourage them from maintaining their christian testimony in these, and all other parts thereof.

And knowing how quickly many are removed by death, it is also weightily recommended, according to former advice, that all Friends, in time of health, and strength of judgment, take care firmly to make their wills, and to dispose of their substance, as in justice and wisdom may be agreeable to their satisfaction.

And where any Friend, or Friends, shall be prosecuted upon any branch of their testimony for the truth, that such labour (in a sense of the weight of their testimony) with the prosecutor, before or at the beginning of his prosecution; that so (if possible) the witness of God in him may be reached, and he convinced, that their refusal to comply proceeds not from obstinacy, or self-interest, but from a godly care to preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and man.

And having under our serious consideration the good and wholesome advice which hath been frequently communicated unto you in several former Yearly Meeting epistles, for your help

and direction in things relating to the testimony of truth in the several parts thereof, we tenderly intreat, that care be taken to see the said advice put in practice in your respective Quarterly and Monthly Meetings; which will tend to the ease and comfort of this meeting.

And this meeting, being under a deep sense that pride, and the vain customs and fashions of the world, prevail over some under our profession, particularly in the excess of apparel and furniture, doth earnestly recommend, that all, who make profession of the truth, take care to be exemplary in what they wear, and what they use; so as to avoid the vain customs of the world, and all extravagancy, in colour and fashion; and keep themselves, in respect thereof, spotless and blameless; adorning their profession in all modesty and sobriety. And that all parents be watchful over their children; and careful not to suffer them to get up into pride and excess; but to keep them to that decent plainness which becomes the people of God: that the sin of the children may not lie upon their parents; nor they be exposed to ruin by their parents' neglect.

And that Friends of all degrees take due care to breed up their children in some useful and necessary employments, that they may not spend their precious time in idleness; which is of evil example, and tends much to their hurt. And that servants, professing the truth, behave themselves in due subjection, humility and plainness, as becomes their profession and places. And likewise masters and mistresses behave themselves towards their servants according to the apostles' direction. EPH. vi. 5, 6. COL. iv. 1. 1 TIM. vi. 1, 2. 1 PET. ii. 18. TIT. ii. 9, 10.

And since the Lord hath been graciously pleased to make us witnesses of that glorious promise of the latter days, that he would be the teacher of his people himself, and that from the greatest to the least; we heartily desire that all, that make this great profession, would be more diligent to wait for the farther fulfilling of this gracious promise in themselves, as the highest of privileges, and the excellency of the glory of the gospel dispensation; and not live nor lean upon the gifts and services of others, as but too many among us are too apt to do; who (had they been faithful and diligent waiters upon the Lord, to have heard and seen what he would have said to, and done for them and in them) might by this time have been able reapers in the harvest, and ministers of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and great had been their service and reward.

And now, dear Friends; the Lord having been graciously pleased, in an eminent manner, to honour this our general assem-

bly with his divine presence and counsel, to our great satisfaction, refreshment and joy; we earnestly recommend you to the guidance of his good spirit, that by it you may be enabled to perform the good and acceptable will of God in all things. To whose holy protection, and fatherly preservation, we heartily commit you all.

We hope the Lord in mercy will give Friends an opportunity to meet at the usual time next year; and therefore desire that faithful Friends may come to attend the same.

Signed, by appointment of this Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXVII—1704.

Dear and tenderly beloved Friends and Brethren,

This our general meeting salutes you in the Lord, and in his ancient love, continued among us, his people, to this day. Blessed be his worthy name and power for ever.

There is no greater joy to us, as a christian society, than the prosperity of the blessed truth and work of the Lord, and Friends' unity, peace, and love in Christ Jesus; whereof we have received divers good and comfortable accounts, both by epistles from foreign parts, as Jamaica, Barbadoes, Antigua, Bermudas, Rhode-Island, Holland, Scotland, and Ireland; as also by the Friends that came up to this meeting, from the several parts of this nation and Wales; which engages us tenderly to recommend to your christian care to labour and endeavour for the continuation and increase thereof.

The account we have of Friends' sufferings this year, for our ancient christian testimony against tithes, and for not paying to the repairs of steeple-houses, does amount to above four thousand two hundred and sixty pounds.

There have been discharged this year twenty-six Friends that were sufferers for truth's testimony. And there remain still one-and-thirty prisoners, most for not paying of tithes. Notwithstanding which, Friends have great encouragement, in the love of God, to continue faithful in their christian testimony, in that and all other respects.

We tenderly recommend and desire, that those Friends that are concerned in the management of the affairs of the church, in the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, be careful to act in the wisdom of God; that they may be exemplary therein to those that are

young : and that those that are worthy to be esteemed members of those meetings, be diligent in attending the same : and that they will encourage such young men and women as they are sensible are qualified, and made capable, through waiting upon God, to serve truth in your respective meetings ; that they may come up, and stand in the life of righteousness, to be serviceable in the church, helpful to the ancient Friends, and fitted to supply their places, as such shall be removed.

And parents are again reminded to continue their godly care, and exercise their just and due authority and command over their children, timely to restrain them from the world's corruptions and extravagances, both in habit and language, behaviour and conversation, that they may keep the way of the Lord, and walk uprightly therein.

We are as a city set upon a hill, and many eyes are upon us ; some for good, and some for evil ; and it is and ought to be our bounden duty and care to answer the one, and frustrate the other. And as our adversaries have been hitherto disappointed, in undertaking to blemish us in principle and doctrine ; so let it be the christian care of all, both young and old, whom God hath blessed with the knowledge of his saving truth, as it is in Jesus, to disappoint those who are watching for our halting or drawing back again into worldly or fleshly liberty, which the enemy in this day of ease is seeking to entangle us again in ; even the bondage of corruption, from which many in measure have been set free. Oh ! stand fast in that holy freedom, in every place where the Lord hath placed you ; and follow peace with all men, and live in unity one with another, and let all strife and contention, whisperings, tale-carriings, and evil reports tending thereunto, be avoided, condemned, and buried under the cross of Christ ; and let all private interests give way to the public good, unity, and prosperity of truth and righteousness ; for so is the will of God concerning you. And by your blameless conversation, and just dealing, engage the government to continue the liberty you now enjoy under it. And let not any lust after the vain fashions and glittering gaiety of this fading world ; for it will suddenly wither, as the mown grass before the sun. And if ye intend to be happy in this life, and that to come, thirst after righteousness, and let holiness be your habitation while on earth ; so shall eternal glory be your crown in heaven hereafter.

And so, dear Friends and brethren, we beseech you, in the love and fear of Almighty God, diligently to mind your holy calling, that you may make your election sure. And in order to it, wait daily upon the Lord, for the renewings of his divine power upon your spirits ; and be you diligent and close walkers with God,

keeping your heavenly ranks in peace and purity in the church, the holy body of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which he is the blessed and heavenly head. To whose holy care and protection we commit you all; and in the fellowship of the gospel of peace, we remain, your Friends.

Signed in behalf of the said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXVIII—1705.

Dear and truly beloved Brethren,

We heartily salute you in the tender love of our heavenly Father, which we enjoy in his beloved Son Jesus Christ; earnestly desiring and breathing unto him, who is the author and fountain of all our mercies, that he may replenish you with his divine goodness, and continue and multiply his tender mercies and blessings, in spiritual things, unto his church and people every where.

Dear Brethren,

Our most gracious God having owned and manifestly blessed this our Yearly Meeting, to our great satisfaction and comfort, by the renewed sense of his blessed power and presence, we glorify and praise his holy name, for his continued goodness, and unspeakable loving-kindness unto us his people: and do humbly pray God to preserve us all sincere and faithful unto him, and in love and peace among ourselves; so that no occasion of offence may be given by any, to provoke him to withdraw his kindness or mercies from us.

And now, dear Friends, in brotherly love we give you to understand, that we have received, as well by Friends and brethren from the several counties in England and Wales, and from Ireland, as by epistles from divers foreign parts (viz. Scotland, Ireland, Holland, New-England, Long-Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica), and by the verbal relations of several faithful brethren, who have lately travelled and laboured in the work of the gospel in those parts, and in Carolina, Bermudas, Nevis, Frederickstadt, and some parts of Germany, such good accounts of the progress and prosperity of truth, and Friends' love and unity, as have been very refreshing to this our Yearly Meeting.

The sufferings which Friends at present remain under, are mostly on the account of tithes, and those called church-rates; on which accounts there remain twenty-seven prisoners, notwith-

standing thirteen have been discharged since last year. And we find the value of what our Friends in England and Wales have suffered on these accounts this last year, amounts to four thousand pounds and upwards. There are also divers Friends still under prosecution for the same testimony.

And it is tenderly advised, that Friends be careful to stand faithful in their ancient testimony; and to keep exact accounts of their sufferings for the same. And when any suffering, requiring a speedy care for relief, is written of to London, it is desired the case may be truly and fully stated, dated, and subscribed by the sufferer; and (as often as can be) attested by some known Friend.

It is also advised and desired, that in all Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, Friends take great care to manage the affairs of truth in a calm, meek and gentle spirit; without heats, discord and contention: "For if any seem to be contentious, we have no such custom in the churches of God." 1 COR. xi. 16. And the apostle's advice also was, "that nothing should be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves; and do all things without murmurings or disputings." PHIL. ii. 3, 14. Which apostolical counsel and good order we desire may be kept to, and carefully observed.

And as it has been frequently advised that Friends should diligently keep their Week-day Meetings; we desire that all, especially such as are esteemed elders, may be exemplary therein.

If any difference is depending, or shall arise, between any persons professing truth amongst us, it is advised and desired, that effectual care, in the wisdom of God, may be taken by Friends of the meeting or meetings to which such persons belong, to put a full and speedy end thereunto; as has been formerly advised, particularly in the year 1697.

And forasmuch as many inconveniences have happened through the neglect of some Friends in not making their wills; as well as by others, in making them in such manner (by unnecessary matter, and improper expressions) as hath created much trouble, dispute and reflection, after their decease; it is therefore thought fit to repeat the advice of the Yearly Meeting in 1703, which is as followeth; viz.

"And knowing how quickly many are removed by death, it is also weightily recommended, according to former advice, that all Friends, in time of health, and strength of judgment, take care to make their wills firmly, and to dispose of their substance, as in justice and wisdom may be to their satisfaction."

It being a principle part of our ancient christian testimony, "to

“do justly; to keep a conscience void of offence towards God
 “and all men; and to give no offence to Jew or Gentile, nor yet
 “to the church of Christ;” we therefore tenderly desire and exhort all Friends to set their affairs in order betimes, and clear themselves, according to truth, in the sight of God and men, in all respects, before their days are ended; that they may leave a good report and sweet savour behind them.

And since the Lord's good providence has so far blessed Friends, as to give them favour with the government; it is desired that Friends would continue with all humility to walk worthy of that mercy; and improve the same, by a gentle and peaceable conversation towards all men, in their respective places of abode.

And now, dear Friends; as truth, in all the branches of its holy testimony, is diligently to be regarded and observed; by which we, as a people, have been distinguished from the rest of the professors of Christianity; so it is our earnest desire, that above all things, Friends “hold fervent charity in the body;” and that will keep the members together in a blessed concord and communion; which is esteemed by the apostle “the more excellent way;” excelling other gifts, which pass away: “But CHARITY (that is, the LOVE of GOD, from which our christian and brotherly affection to and for one another springs) shall endure for ever.” This “envieth not, vaunteth not, boasteth not itself, and seeketh not its own. But is patient; beareth all things; suffereth all things; and watcheth not with an evil eye: no; nor thinketh ill; but is kind.” In which blessed love, dear Friends, hold your fellowship one with another: which was the character of the Primitive Christians. And blessed be the Lord, it has been said by many in this our day, in favour of our holy profession, “Look how they love one another!” In which the Lord preserve us all! For since “God is love, and they who dwell in love, dwell in God,” they dwell in that wherein the heavenly places in Christ Jesus are enjoyed; and where the first christians sat and dwelt, and the children of the light in our days do sit and dwell also; where all evil jealousies, envying, strife, self-seekings, and self-exaltings, are excluded; and instead thereof, the elders watch tenderly over the flock of God, using the authority that truth has given them in the church with much meekness; and the younger behave themselves with humility and fear; according to the apostle's admonition, 1 TIM. v. 1 PET. v. And the members of the whole body, by a tender condescension to one another, and a due subjection to Christ, their holy head, edify the same in love to the end. Which the Lord God of all our many mercies pre-

serve and increase more and more, by his blessed spirit and power, among his people!

Signed in behalf of the said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXIX—1706.

Dear and well beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the dear love of our heavenly Father, which we have in his Son Jesus Christ, we salute you; heartily desiring truth's prosperity, and the abounding of true love, unity, and concord amongst you, to your great comfort and edification in the spirit of life and love in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that you may grow up in him in all things; to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We earnestly intreat that a general care and labour be fervently exercised, "to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;" that all may live in love, peace, and concord among yourselves.

We doubt not it will be to your comfort, as it hath been to ours, to hear of the progress and prosperity of truth in England and Wales; as also of the accounts we have from our Friends, who have travelled and laboured in many parts beyond the seas, in the work of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; to the convincing of divers, and to the comforting and refreshing his flock in those parts and countries; and to the stopping of the mouths of gainsayers, who would obstruct the work of the Lord.

Likewise we have good accounts from Holland, Friesland, Embden, Holstein, and divers other provinces on the sea-coast of Germany, of an openness in sundry places amongst people of divers professions; and that the visits of faithful brethren, and ministers of Christ, are very desirable and acceptable, both to Friends and their serious neighbours, in divers places.

And by epistles from Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Jamaica, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Maryland, and Antigua, we understand that great love and unity is among the faithful brethren.

As to the sufferings which Friends do now remain under, they are mostly on account of tithes, and those called church-rates; on which account there now remain thirty-three prisoners, although nine have been discharged since the last year. And we find the value our Friends in England and Wales have suffered in that

time on these accounts, amounts to three thousand eight hundred eighty-four pounds and upwards; and that there are also divers Friends still under prosecution for the same testimony.

And it is tenderly and earnestly pressed and advised, that Friends be very careful to keep exact accounts of their sufferings, and to have them well attested and subscribed when they are sent up, as was advised in the last year's epistle; to which they are referred in this particular.

And forasmuch as, next to our own souls, our children and offspring are the most immediate objects of our care and concern, it is tenderly recommended to all that are or may be parents or guardians of children, that they be diligently exercised in this care and concern for the education of those committed to their charge; that in their tender years they may be brought to a sense of God, his wisdom, power, and omnipresence, so as to beget an awe and fear of him in their hearts (which is the beginning of wisdom); and as they grow up in capacity, to acquaint them with, and bring them up in the frequent reading of, the scriptures of truth; and also to instruct them in the great love of God, through Jesus Christ, and the work of salvation by him, and of sanctification through his blessed spirit; and also to keep them out of the vain and foolish fashions and ways of the world, and in plainness of language, habit and behaviour; that being thus instructed in the way of the Lord when they are young, they may not forget it when old; or, however, that all concerned may be clear in the sight of God, that they have not been wanting in their duties to them. And that the labour and travail of Friends therein may be more effectual, it is our tender desire, that seasonable opportunities may be taken to wait upon the Lord, with your children, in your families, for the manifestation of his blessed power, to make them sensible of his witness and seed of life and grace in their hearts, in order to beget them into a living knowledge and love of the truth as it is in Jesus.

And dear Friends and brethren; in the name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ keep all your meetings intirely; both those for his divine worship, and those for good order and discipline in the church. Which divine power we all ought to wait to feel, to prepare and sanctify our minds and spirits, that we may be duly qualified for our share and part of our service therein. And in the same heavenly power and dominion labour to keep out strife and contention; and stand over all froward and contentious spirits; not in your own, but in the meek spirit of the Lamb of God: "for if any man lusts to be contentious (as said the apostle of old), we have no such custom (nor can we allow thereof) in the church of Christ." So will all be done in an holy awe, rever-

ence, and humility; and none will intrude themselves into things too high for them, nor exalt themselves above their proper growths and stations in the church, whether they be elder or younger; but self (that great mountain which stands so much in opposition to the cross of Christ, and his love and peace in the church) will be abased, and the Lord alone exalted among his people.

And therefore, tenderly-beloved Friends and brethren; let it be the universal travail and earnest breathing of all your souls to the Lord, our most gracious and glorious God, that his Sion, his whole church and people, may shine in the beauty of holiness, and therein become the perfection of beauty; out of which God will yet shine more to the nations, that they may be affected and drawn more and more towards the city of our solemnities, and his mountain of holiness; and that the good order of Christ's house and family may be an effectual inducement unto the residue of men to seek after him.

And now, dear Friends and brethren; we dearly salute and embrace you in the love of our God and Father, the greast Master of this our solemn assembly, and bid you heartily farewell in the Lord.

Signed in behalf of the said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXX—1707.

To whom this our solemn assembly sendeth greeting, in the love of our heavenly Father, which we have in his dear Son Jesus Christ; whereby, as a people whom he hath greatly loved and favoured with his presence, we are obliged to love one another in deed and in truth, and to maintain good order in the exercise of our christian religion, in the fellowship of his holy Spirit and gospel of peace; which we pray God may increase more and more among us, whom he hath chosen out of the world, to be a peculiar people unto himself.

And dear Friends and brethren; the Lord's power and presence having, to our great comfort, been largely manifested amongst us, a holy care and concern, in the love and wisdom of God, hath been upon our hearts, to communicate unto you the following particulars.

And first; as to the sufferings of our Friends in England and Wales, since the last Yearly Meeting, they have been chiefly for

tithes, and partly those called church-rates; the accounts whereof amount to three thousand eight hundred sixty-five pounds and upwards. Besides several Friends are at this time under severe prosecutions, whose sufferings not being completed, could not be inserted in this account. And although the number of prisoners is somewhat lessened, yet several do still continue prisoners on the said accounts.

Our beloved Friend Samuel Bownas, who hath lately been in the service of truth in America, being present, gave a large account of the progress and prosperity of truth and Friends in New-England, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, East and West-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, and other parts where he travelled.

We had also epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, North-Carolina, Barbadoes, and Antigua, giving a good account of the prosperity of truth, and unity of Friends therein, to the great satisfaction of this meeting; and particularly from Antigua, from whence we had a brief relation of the Lord's eminently preserving that island (wherein are a few Friends) from the insults and spoil of the French, to whom their neighbouring islands of Nevis and Christopher's became a prey.

And in most of the places aforesaid, we understand, by their epistles, there is great openness among the people, and many convinced of the blessed truth.

And both in this nation, Ireland, and several foreign parts, we understand there are great desires the Lord of the harvest would send forth more faithful labourers to visit them; which we heartily pray for.

And we being sensible of the hurt that may happen by persons under the profession of truth, in drawing out the affections of one another, without the knowledge and consent of parents or guardians; do, for preventing such mischief, deliver it as our sense and judgment, that in case any person reputed a **QUAKER**, shall endeavour to entangle the affection of any young woman professing truth, or shall make suit unto her in order to marriage, without the privity and consent of her parents or guardians first had and obtained (whether such parents or guardians be Friends or not), such persons ought not to be allowed or permitted to proceed in any meeting of Friends, in order to the accomplishing such intended marriage, until they shall have removed the offence, and given satisfaction both to such parents or guardians, and to the meeting of Friends to which they do belong, by an open and due acknowledgment of the offence, and condemnation of

themselves therefor, and shall have obtained the consent of such parents or guardians.

And it is further advised, that after parents and guardians have suffered their children to engage one another in affections, they do not break off upon any worldly account; but that they wait upon and seek the Lord for their children, in proposals of marriage, before they give any encouragement thereunto.

Our womens' meetings being set up and approved in the love of God, and by his wisdom and power, and of manifest service, and helpful in the church; it is the earnest desire and advice of this meeting they may be upheld and encouraged where they are settled, by Monthly and Quarterly Meetings; and that in such counties and places where they are not, it be the care of the Quarterly Meetings to endeavour they may be set up and encouraged in proper and convenient places, where they may be most serviceable and helpful.

And now, our dear and well beloved Friends, brethren, and sisters, united in the one holy faith and spirit, worship and discipline throughout this nation, and the neighbouring nations, provinces and islands beyond the seas, let us be faithful to the holy profession we make in fear, love, and watchfulness; and we shall be fruitful, having our fruits unto holiness, that our end may be eternal life; the great design of religion, pure and undefiled before God the Father; of which he has given and sent us the true pattern from his heavenly mount, where he appeared to our forefathers in the truth, and also unto us, that were instrumentally begotten by them to God. Oh! press forward, that ye fall not short of this heavenly pattern in all your converse, that has been so well recommended by those dear servants of the Lord, that were examples, as well as preachers thereof; who are gone before us to their eternal rest and recompence. And therefore let us all walk with much circumspection, fear, and humility before the Lord, under the sense of our present outward liberty, and the temporal mercies that have for some years attended the same; that our love and service for the Lord, and his holy truth and church, may have the preference of our worldly business in our thoughts, lest we should incur the Lord's displeasure, for an ungrateful neglect of our duty and thankfulness to him. For it has been sometimes the Lord's method to deprive his people of the favours they abuse; though he is a God slow to anger, and of long-suffering towards his children.

For the continuance of the great love and goodness of the Lord God to us as a people, and that his eye and divine hand has been over this assembly for good to all; let us all bless and praise his worthy name and power; and serve him in true humility and

thankfulness, and one another in love, that the God of peace may for ever be with us.

Signed by appointment of this Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXXI—1708.

Beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the tender love of our heavenly Father, which we have in his dear Son Christ Jesus, we salute you; earnestly desiring, that he, who is the Father and fountain of all our mercies and consolations, may thoroughly sanctify the hearts of all his people, unto true and constant thankfulness and faithfulness for all his rich mercies, blessings, and privileges, continued unto us, as his peculiar people, until this day.

And dear Friends; as the Lord has been exceeding good and gracious to us in this our solemn meeting, by favouring us with his divine power and presence, to the opening the hearts of Friends in love to him, and one to another; and therein brought an holy fear, and godly concern upon us, for the exaltation of his name and truth in the earth; we, in that love, recommend to you the following accounts and advices.

The sufferings that our Friends in Great Britain now remain under, are mostly on account of tithes, and partly those called church-rates; for which (according to the accounts now brought in), there hath been taken from Friends to the value of about four thousand pounds. And there remain yet prisoners twenty-seven Friends on those accounts, notwithstanding some have been discharged.

We have (by Friends that are come from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, &c.) received divers good accounts of the prosperity of truth, the love and unity amongst Friends, and of openness in the hearts of people in many places, to hear and receive truth's testimony; and that many are convinced.

The like good accounts we have also received, as well by the verbal relations of our dear Friends John Fothergill, and William Armitstead (who have lately travelled, in the service of truth, in most parts of America where Friends are), as by epistles from Friends in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, New-England, Long-Island, East and West-Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Antigua: which accounts were very comfortable and refreshing to this meeting.

And dear Friends, Brethren and Sisters in Christ,

We desire your godly care for the due education and safety of your children within the bounds and limits of truth in all respects, may be continued and increased among you; and that parents be exemplary to their children, in keeping out of the vain fashions, customs, and pride of the world, by adorning themselves modestly and in plainness, according to the simplicity of truth received by us in the beginning. And that you may be carefully and zealously concerned for our ancient christian testimony against mixt marriages; that none of your children may be corrupted and alienated from truth thereby.

And to prevent the great scandal and reproach which any professing truth may bring on it, by breaking in other men's debt; we remind you to exercise a godly care therein (as much as in you lies) by giving timely caution to any such, as either break their promises, or delay payment of their just debts, or otherwise render themselves suspected.

And forasmuch as some persons (who, by their ill conduct, have justly deserved, and come under, the censure of the meetings to which they belong) have thought to get from under the weight of that judgment, by signing a paper of CONDEMNATION, and thereby suppose themselves discharged; it is therefore recommended to Friends' consideration, that they be careful not to admit such persons too early into fellowship (or to give them cause to think they are accepted,) before the meeting or meetings are satisfied in their repentance and amendment, notwithstanding such paper be given.

And in that a godly care is growing among Friends in many places, that all things which are unsavoury and hurtful might be removed; that so all that profess the precious truth with us, may come up together in the good order of the gospel; for the furthering thereof, and encouraging thereunto, it is recommended, that weighty and sensible Friends, of unblameable conversations, be chosen, in the wisdom of God, to visit the families of Friends in his love; who are desired to advise or admonish in the peaceable spirit of truth, as occasion may be seen.

And now to conclude; it is earnestly desired and advised, in the love of Christ, that all Friends every where labour for unity and peace; and that love and good works may be maintained amongst us, and union and concord in the Holy Spirit increased, and our good constitution and order upheld in all the churches of Christ; that in him (our ancient foundation) all his people may be fitly framed, united, and knit together, and grow up to an holy temple in the Lord, that he may delight to do us good, and to dwell amongst us for ever; to whom be everlasting praise and

dominion for evermore. To whose divine protection we heartily recommend and commit you ; and remain, your Friends and brethren.

Signed on behalf of the said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXXII—1709.

Dear and truly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the tender love of Christ Jesus our Lord, this meeting salutes you. The continuance of the great love and tender mercies of the Lord our God to us, as his peculiar people, calls for faithfulness, true humility, and thankful hearts on our parts to him, with sincere love, and fervent charity among ourselves ; in which we pray God his people may be preserved and prosper, to his eternal glory and praise.

In this our solemn assembly the Lord has not been wanting to favour us with his blessed presence and counsel, tending to the increase of love, and christian society among us, who are thereby concerned for his name and truth, that the same may be exalted and prosper in his whole heritage, and in all the earth ; and in true love the following accounts and advices are recommended to you.

Dear Friends,

It was matter of great comfort to us, to have so many sensible accounts as we have had of the prosperity of the blessed truth, and work of the Lord ; and, generally, of the love, unity, and peace in the church of Christ, both by epistles from remote and foreign parts (as, not only from Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, but also from divers parts in America ; as particularly, Jamaica, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys,) and also by the many weighty accounts given by Friends from their respective counties, and from Holland and Germany.

The account of Friends sufferings brought in since the last Yearly Meeting, amounts to 4440 l. and upwards ; chiefly upon the account of tithes, and partly for church-rates, so called.

There are twenty-three prisoners discharged since last Yearly Meeting, most of them by the Queen's late act of grace ; and there are about sixteen still remaining prisoners ; divers of which, we expect, will be shortly released, by virtue of the aforesaid act.

And it is desired, that as soon as any more Friends shall be discharged in any county, care be taken speedily to send up their names to the Meeting for Sufferings in London.

And dear Friends; we hereby let you know, that the last general collection, made seven years ago, has been some time since wholly expended in the service of truth, for which it was made. And therefore we hold it very necessary now to recommend unto you, that a general and free contribution be made in the several meetings of our Friends in every county, to be employed in the service of truth: and that what shall be thereupon collected, be sent up, with as much convenient speed as may be, to our Friends John Wilcox, Jos. Toovey, Thomas Bond, Peter Bowen, William Chamberlain, and Richard Crafton, or some of them.

We hope we need not put you in mind, that truth leads all, who faithfully follow it, to do right and justice to all, and not to defraud or wrong any, in any way of commerce, trade, trust, or dealing; much less to put any abuse on the government, by endeavours to diminish any of the customs, excise, or any other publick civil dues. Yet if any, going under our profession, should happen to be so far tempted, through covetousness, and the love of unrighteous gain, as to be drawn into any such evil, we desire you will deal with such persons, to make them sensible of such corrupt and pernicious practices; that our holy profession may not be blemished thereby, nor any offence given, or injury done, by being concerned in prohibited goods, or wrecks unrighteously taken away from the just owners.

And dear Friends, brethren and sisters in Christ, who are heads of families, and especially such who are elders in the church of Christ, be all diligent and careful to watch over the young generation; that sobriety, plainness and virtue, may be encouraged and promoted, and exemplarily recommended by you to them; that the liberty too many of our youth take in following the fashions and customs of the world, which tend to the dishonour and reproach of the testimony of the blessed truth, may be discouraged, and such as are found in the same dealt with, in the fear, wisdom, and love of God, that they may be won and brought into humility and subjection to the Lord and his truth.

And let the aged remember, and the youth know, that when apparent signs of the plague of leprosy appeared on the walls in the houses of Israel, it was the care of the priest under the law, to have the houses cleansed, and the lepers also. And surely Christ's priesthood should not fall short of their care to endeavour to stop and remove the manifest tokens of the leprosy of the great sin of pride, and all superfluity of naughtiness. And therefore let all concerned be earnestly stirred up to sincere obedience to the light of Christ, our great high priest; that he may cleanse the hearts and houses of that growing plague, which tends to the ruin of families and posterity.

And further, that nothing may be wanting in Friends' care towards their children, let all be concerned to see that they do not only watch over them for good, but that they also rule over them in the fear of the Lord; and none, in the fondness of affection, lose the authority wherein the Lord has set them for their childrens' preservation. And let all be examples to them, in wisdom, moderation, and plainness, in language and habit; and not examples only, but also to restrain them from any thing that might be their hurt, either inwardly or outwardly; neither providing for them costly and gaudy attire, unbecoming godliness, nor letting them have money to gratify themselves therein.

We recommend it as an incumbent duty on Friends, to cause them to be frequent in reading the holy scriptures, and in observing to them the examples of such children as in scripture are recorded to have early learned the fear of the Lord, and hearkened to his counsel; instructing them in the fear and dread of the Lord, planting impressions upon their spirits of reverence towards God, from whom they have their daily support; shewing them they ought not to offend him, but love, serve and honour him, in whose hands all blessings are. And as their hearts are seasoned with truth, and made good, good fruits, agreeable to truth, will appear, to the honour of God, and the comfort of their tender parents; who ought to watch over them, that they be not careless of going to meetings, where the Lord's power hath often broke in upon children, and given them early tokens of his future favour. For hereby he hath brought many to know the God of their fathers; and the hearts of many have been inclined sincerely to desire that he might be their God also, and their guide all the days of their lives. And it hath been comfortable to many to wait upon the Lord with them in their private families, to feel the divine power break in upon them, that they may know the Lord for themselves; and knowing him, serve him.

And where Friends want ability in the world, their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings are desired to assist them; that the children of the poor may have due help of education, instruction, and necessary learning. And that children (both of rich and poor) may be early provided with industrious employments, that they may not grow up in idleness, looseness, and vice; but that, being thus seasoned with truth, sanctified of God, and taught our holy self-denying way, they may appear a reputation to our holy profession, the comfort of their honest parents, instrumental to the glory of God, and the good of the generation coming on.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We hope you are not insensible, that it is only divine wisdom from above, that truly qualifies faithful elders for helps in govern-

ment, and good order in the church of Christ, our glorious Lord and excellent pattern; who has given us of his spirit, and left us an example of love, humility, and meekness. Wherefore in his light and spirit of wisdom it is safe, and becomes us all, daily to wait, to feel his power; that all things may be managed and done therein, even in the name, spirit and power of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that he may be all in all, in all his members, both men and women: and in his name, power, and authority, all to stand witnesses for him, against all iniquity, pride, and covetousness, which is idolatry; and against sowing discord, divisions, strife, and contention, which cometh by pride; let it be shut out of the Lord's camp for ever, and that spirit that lusteth after it. Yet be tender to every tender plant in the Lord's heritage, and let not "the bruised reed be broken;" but let mercy and compassion flow through you, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, to all that are truly and tenderly affected towards him, for their encouragement, growth and prosperity in the blessed truth.

To avoid repeating too many things heretofore recommended, Friends are hereby desired to put in practice the former advices relating to truth's testimony, in the several branches thereof; and particularly that advice of the Yearly Meeting epistle in the year 1693.

"Oh! Sion, let thy king reign and prosper; that peace may be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces; and shine forth in the beauty of holiness, in thy beautiful garments, where-with thy heavenly king arrays thee, and will adorn all thy faithful children."

We tenderly conclude in the words of the holy apostle; "peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Signed by order of the Yearly Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXXIII—1710.

Beloved Friends and Brethren,

We tenderly salute you in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; heartily desiring the increase of sincere love, union, and concord among you, and in all the churches of Christ; that the true comfort thereof may be continued with you all; so that the God of love and peace may be with you unto the end.

In this our great solemnity, humbly attending upon the Lord, he hath favoured us with his living presence and ancient power; to the opening many hearts and understandings, the more to prepare them to serve him and his church in true love: wherein the following particulars are recommended to you; and the more briefly, as being a sensible intelligent people, obliged faithfully to serve the Lord our God, and his people, in your day and age.

By Friends who came from the several Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales, and from Scotland and Ireland, and by epistles from our brethren of Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys, Maryland, West-River, Virginia, North-Carolina, and Flushing upon Long-Island, we have good accounts of truth's prosperity, and Friends' fellowship one with another therein.

The sufferings that our Friends in England and Wales at present remain under, are chiefly for our ancient testimony against tithes, and partly those called church-rates. And according to the accounts brought in from Friends of the several counties, there hath been taken from Friends above the value of five thousand pounds. There are about twelve at present prisoners, notwithstanding thirteen have been discharged since the last account, mostly by the Queen's act of grace.

Our christian testimony and caution has been so often already given against the ANTICHRISTIAN YOKE, whereby many suffer, that we do not think it necessary to be always repeating the same; for we hope we write unto a living and sensible people, to whom the Lord hath given an understanding heart, endued with christian care to keep to truth's testimony in all respects, in behalf of Christ, his everlasting priesthood, kingdom and government. And that this meeting's former counsel in this respect be not omitted, we refer to the advice given in the year 1706.

We doubt not but Antichrist's kingdom must come down. And the more faithful Friends are, keeping in the unity of the spirit and bond of peace, the more they will see the gospel (the power and kingdom of Christ) prevailing; and he will plead their cause against the persecuting spirit of Antichrist and Babylon.

Considering the great suffering that hath been brought upon truth and faithful Friends, by divers, professing truth amongst us, breaking their words, promises, and obligations, to the great injury of others, by not paying their just debts in due time; and the sad consequences thereof, and reproaches brought thereby, notwithstanding our great care, and many warnings given for prevention thereof; which being too many to recite here, we refer you to the * advice formerly given by our ancient Friend and

* Epistle of caution to traders.

brother, G. F. to shopkeepers, merchants, factors, or any other Friends; which this meeting hath thought proper to recommend unto you in print, and advise that it be read in your Quarterly and Monthly Meetings as you may see occasion, at least once a year.

A tender and weighty concern has been upon our assembly, as formerly, for the good education of our Friends' children in the light and way of truth, in humility and the fear of the Lord our God, that he may be the guide of our youth unto his heavenly kingdom. This great concern being also more fully intimated in our last Yearly Meeting epistle, we refer thereto. The Lord knows we would not have any of our dear Friends' children (who are natural branches of a good stock) degenerate from that good seed and tender plant that he has sown and planted in them; nor corrupted from truth's simplicity, or innocency, by the society or ill examples of any other children; which Friends who are parents should take timely care to prevent.

We also advise, that a due care be upon all parents, and guardians of children and youth, to watch over them, and tenderly to exhort them to seek the Lord in that weighty affair of marriage, and to wait upon him in the light for counsel, and the direction of his holy spirit, in that great concern, that his blessing may be upon them. In order to which, let none make the earth and the world the ground of their choice; for that will not procure the blessing, but the contrary; and will grieve the Lord, may spoil families, and bring an exercise on the church of Christ.

We also esteem it very necessary and requisite, that young-convinced and well inclined persons and Friends be early visited in the love of God by faithful Friends, for their encouragement, help and furtherance in the truth. And that the christian duty of visiting the sick be timely remembered and practised: it having often left comfort, ease, and sweetness upon the spirits of many, to their very end.....Also to be careful in due time to take the weighty testimonies of dying Friends.

Lastly; in the dear love and tender bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, we recommend you to his wisdom and guidance in all your weighty and necessary concerns in his church; and that your conversation may be in all things as becometh the gospel, holy and unblameable, to his glory and honour, and your everlasting peace.

We conclude with this ancient christian advice, "That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." PHIL. i. 27. Watching over yourselves, your families, and one another, in the fear and love of God

that by his heavenly poweryou may be preserved to his heavenly kingdom. The Lord be with you all. Amen.

Signed on behalf of this said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING,

EPISTLE XXXIV—1711.

Beloved Friends,

In true and tender love in our Lord Jesus Christ is our renewed salutation unto you ; blessing our most gracious God for the continuance of his goodness and manifold mercies unto us ; and heartily desiring your preservation and prosperity, in his dear Son Jesus Christ, in all things, to his glory, and your peace and comfort, in the faithful discharge of the christian care and trust the Lord hath committed to you, in order to promote and maintain gospel order in the churches of Christ.

This epistle is recommended to your tender notice, as being a living and sensible people.

The many accounts we had, from the respective counties in England and Wales, of truth's prosperity (importing the enlarging the sanctuary of the Lord, and preparing many people for himself ; and especially of love, union, and good order among Friends), were very acceptable and comfortable to this our solemn assembly : knowing that where charity is put on, and love abounds, there is the principle comfort of our christian and holy society.

It was also matter of joy, to hear from divers parts of the Lord's merciful visitation taking hold of some of our young generation, and bowing their souls before him ; who deserve your christian notice, and tender care, for their help and encouragement in the love of the truth : for it is the hearty travail of Friends, that we may see more of that blessed work upon the youth among us. But on the other hand, we are sorrowfully affected, because of those whose love to pride, and other vanities of the world, is too apparent, by their declining the humble, meek, and self-denying example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We likewise have received good accounts, as well by the verbal relations of some Public-Friends (who have travelled in the service of truth in Holland, and divers other eastern countries, and in most of the English provinces on the main land of America,) as by epistles from Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Friesland, Frederickstadt, Maryland, Virginia, Long-Island, Rhode-Island,

Penusylvania, and the two Jerseys; which accounts were very acceptable and refreshing to the meeting.

The sufferings our Friends are under at present, are mostly for their testimonies against the payment of tithes, and those called church-rates; for which, by the accounts now brought up from the several counties in England and Wales, it appears there has been taken from Friends to the value of five thousand pounds and upwards, since the last account; and that there are twelve prisoners for the same, notwithstanding eight have been discharged since last year.

And now, dear Friends, we tenderly advise you all to keep to the Lord's power, and wait for his wisdom in all your meetings; so will your own spirits be kept in subjection to his, and you will be cloathed with the meek spirit of the lamb, in which you will be tender of the Lord's glory, and of one another, watching over the flock of Christ in meekness of wisdom; so will you have a clear discerning between them that serve God, and them that serve him not; and have dominion over every perverse unruly spirit, and place judgment upon it, and thereby keep it out from among you.

And we beseech you to keep to the truth, as it is in Jesus; holding him your heavenly head in all things, who is the author of our salvation: for which end the Father gave him: to whom, for all his manifold mercies, through his beloved Son, the Immaculate Lamb, be all honour, glory, and praise, with love, fear, service, reverence, and obedience, world without end.

So with very dear and tender love in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, we conclude with this ancient apostolical counsel, "Above all things put on charity (that is love,) which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts; to which ye are also called in one body; and be thankful." COL. iii. 14, 15.

Hoping the Lord in mercy will give Friends an opportunity to meet at the usual time next year; it is desired that such Friends as may be sent to our Yearly Meeting, from the respective Quarterly Meetings, may be well approved, and known to be of unblameable conversations, walking in love and unity with Friends.

Signed in behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXXV—1712.

Dear and tenderly-beloved Friends and brethren in Christ Jesus, to whom the salutation of true love is extended, we humbly beseech our heavenly Father, that grace, love, and peace may be multiplied unto you, through his dear Son Jesus Christ; and that in him we all may enjoy fervent love, comfort, peace, and concord among ourselves, and that the same may abound more and more in all the churches of Christ throughout the whole world, unto the glory of our God, and perfection of Zion's beauty; for which it appears greatly necessary for us all, humbly and earnestly to present our requests and supplications constantly unto him, who is the great repairer of breaches, and restorer of paths to dwell in. The day calls for such an universal and deep travail of soul among us all; that the Lord our God may cast his skirt over us, and hide and preserve us under the shadow of his wing.

We have had this year comfortable accounts of truth's prosperity, love and unity among brethren, and divers convinced of the blessed truth in several parts of Great-Britain and Ireland.

And by epistles received from several English colonies in America; and also from some eastern countries, as Holstein, Holland, and Friesland; we understand that Friends are preserved in brotherly love; and that sober people do, at times, resort to Friends' meetings.

The sufferings of Friends this year, according to accounts brought in, having been mostly for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount to the sum of five thousand three hundred and seventy pounds and upwards, in that part of Great Britain called England and Wales.

There have been discharged this year five prisoners; and there are continued eleven prisoners, chiefly by exchequer process, upon suits for tithes.

And Friends, as we are taught by the grace of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; and that our moderation in all things may appear before all men; let all Friends concerned in and about marriages, keep within the bounds of truth, sobriety, and temperance, and be examples thereof; that whether they eat or drink, or whatever else they do, it may be to the glory of God.

And as the truth is the foundation of right fellowship with God, and communion one with another, we exhort all such as are professors of it, faithfully to obey the same, in keeping to the

cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the several testimonies thereof; so that none may despise the day of small things, nor turn aside from the plainness, simplicity, and life of the truth, into the words, ways, customs, and fashions of the world, which are vain, and will perish with using (God having redeemed his people out of the same, through his righteous judgments in their inward parts;) knowing that whatever hath been condemned and overturned thereby, is never to be built up again, by any that are lovers of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

We also exhort all parents of children to be very careful to educate and train them up in the fear of God, and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, according to the Holy Scriptures; and be good examples to them in all things, as becomes men and women professing godliness, that good footsteps may be left by us to future generations; which may be helpful to the preservation of those that succeed us in the right way of the Lord.

And we pray, let no seeds of discord, strife, or contention be sown or received by any of us in the church, to the disturbance thereof. And let all be careful to walk inoffensively towards the government under which we live.

So dear Friends and brethren, let us all be tender of the glory of God, and the honour of his holy name and truth professed among us, and follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which none shall see the Lord; and (as he hath taught us) have salt in ourselves, and be at peace one with another, that the God of love and peace may continue his presence with us to the end of our days; that we may all approve ourselves true and faithful servants unto our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father, be glory and dominion for ever.

Signed in behalf of the said Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXXVI—1713.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

The salutation of love in the Lord Jesus Christ, our peaceable Saviour, and blessed Mediator, is extended unto you; heartily wishing, that grace, mercy, and peace may abound among us all, and in all the churches of Christ everywhere, that the spring of life and sincere love may yet arise and flow through all, for perfect unity of spirit, in the bond of true lasting peace and concord.

Great travail and endeavours have been on the spirits of many

faithful Friends in this our annual assembly, for the continuance and increase of primitive love, and comfortable fellowship of the holy Spirit; which we hope the Lord will graciously answer, as we all wait upon him in deep humiliation, contrition of heart, and earnest supplication, which the present day and heavy exercises call for.

And we earnestly beseech all Friends and brethren diligently to watch and wait in faith and patience in the light of the Lord, against our grand adversary, the sower of strife, discord, and divisions, the old accuser of the brethren; that he may not prevail to bring his evil and destructive designs to pass in God's heritage.

And we desire and advise that all Friends be tenderly careful, that such who are weak in the faith, or young-convinced, be received: but not to doubtful disputations. And all keep to, and attend upon, the gospel of peace, in an humble christian spirit; which will tend to the peace, union and good order of the churches of Christ. For which end and purpose the Lord govern all his servants and ministers with his divine and peaceable wisdom; therein to be such good and christian examples of the believers, as mentioned 1 TIM. iv. 12.

And as concerning the education of Friends' children; the keeping up of First-day, and other Week-day meetings; together with the divers branches of our testimony relating to tithes, and other sufferings for truth's sake; not being willing too often to repeat the same things, we recommend to your serious and weighty consideration the several advices heretofore given in our former Yearly Meeting epistles, that the same may be duly recommended by the Quarterly Meetings to the several Monthly and particular Meetings, in order to the further observance and practice thereof; as particularly those epistles in the years 1688, 1692, 1706, &c.

And dear Friends; the Friends of this meeting, to whom the inspection of the accounts was referred, make report, that having perused the books and the accounts relating to Friends, they find the stock near expended: whereupon this meeting thinks it necessary, now to recommend unto you, that a general and free contribution be made, in the several meetings of our Friends in every county; and that what shall be thereupon collected, be sent up to the correspondents of the several counties, in order to be paid to William Wragg, Jonathan Scarth, Anthony Neat, Andrew Pitt, John Turner, and John Constantine, some or any of them.

We have received sundry good accounts from several counties in England and Wales; as also the like from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Rhode-Island, Holland, Friesland, and Ireland, concerning

the prosperity of truth, and unity of Friends in many places; and also from Scotland, that in some parts thereof there was an openness to receive the testimony of truth; and likewise at Frederickstadt, notwithstanding the great oppression and impoverishment by the armies, yet they have enjoyed their meetings peaceably.

The whole of Friends' sufferings this year, in England and Wales, amounts to four thousand seven hundred pounds, and upwards; chiefly on account of tithes. And we desire all Friends may be faithful in this our ancient testimony, and careful in recording their sufferings for the same, pursuant to former advices. There have been two prisoners discharged since last year, two died prisoners, and eight continued prisoners.

Finally, dear and well beloved Friends and brethren, farewell in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; labour to promote love; live in peace, that the God of peace may be with you. Amen.

Signed on behalf of the said meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXXVII—1714.

Beloved Friends and Brethren,

The salutation of sincere love, in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, freely reaches unto you; we heartily wishing grace, love, and peace in him may be increased and multiplied unto you all: even to all the churches of Christ, that the peace of God may rule in all your hearts, whereunto you are called in one body;* even by that one eternal spirit of life and love, whereby we have been gathered and preserved to be a people to this day: blessed be God, the Father and fountain of all our mercies, for evermore.

There remains a weighty obligation upon us, and the Lord's whole heritage, to deep humiliation, and fervent supplication, and travail of soul to Almighty God, that he may increase universal charity, peace, and concord among us, and the whole church of Christ. Humbly hoping, that he would graciously please to bring his people into such nearness of spirit and mutual understanding, that love and peace may increase more and more among us.

* Col. iii. 15.

It was very satisfactory to this meeting, to receive an account from brethren of the Morning Meeting, held the same day that this our Yearly Meeting began, that they were comfortably attended with the reviving presence and counsel of the Lord our God, whose name was and is near us. And in the public meetings of business we had refreshing seasons, as the Lord was waited upon in stillness, and counsel was quietly heard.

Sundry epistles from places abroad, as Long-Island, North-Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Rhode-Island, Holland, Frederickstadt; and also from some places nearer home, as Wales, Scotland, and Ireland; were read in this our meeting, expressing, in divers of them, how peaceably, lovingly, and comfortably their affairs, relating to truth, were carried on and managed; wherein their good example is commendable. Mentioning also the Lord's largely manifesting his presence in their Yearly and other meetings.

When any Friend, or Friends, remove to any of the plantations in America, or other parts, it is advised, that their going be with consent of the Monthly Meetings whereto they belong; and that they take a certificate of their conversation and unity with Friends; and, if single persons, of their clearness respecting marriage; and if they have parents living, that the parents do signify their minds relating thereunto to some particular Friends, or to some meeting in the country whereto they go.

The sufferings of Friends this year, by the accounts brought in from England and Wales, do amount unto four thousand four hundred and sixty pounds, and upwards; mostly on account of tithes.

There have been five Friends discharged from their imprisonments on truth's account since last year; notwithstanding there do still remain nine Friends prisoners, mostly upon account of tithes.

It is recommended, that Friends take care that those who are desired and appointed to come up to Yearly Meetings, may be men fearing God, of good conversations, of weighty spirits, prudent and sincere, and well acquainted with the affairs of truth at home.

To conclude, dear and well beloved Friends, farewell in our blessed Lord, the prince of life and peace; still labour to provoke one another to love and good works; have salt in yourselves (even that of the everlasting covenant) and be at peace one with another.* Dwell in humility, and walk in the meek and tender spirit of our great mediator towards one another; and strive not,

but be gentle towards all men ;....it is the LAMB shall have the victory.

There seems at present to hang over us a cloud threatening a storm. Let us all watch and pray ; and retire to our munition and strong-hold in our spiritual rock and foundation, which standeth sure ; that our God may defend, help and bless us, as his peculiar people, to the end of our days and time here, and the full fruition of the heavenly kingdom and glory hereafter.*

The God of peace bruise Satan, the author of strife and confusion, under our feet ! that primitive love and concord may be renewed, and fully restored among his people.†

Signed on behalf of the said Yearly Meeting, by
BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XXXVIII—1715.

The salutation of our ancient and fervent love, in our Lord Jesus Christ being freely extended unto you, our earnest breathings, travail and supplication in him, are, that sincere love, and settled peace, with all divine and christian virtues, may be increased and multiplied unto you, and to us all. And as we are called in one body to enjoy that peace and comfort of love, in the spirit of life, wherein we have been gathered and preserved to be a people to this day, and chosen out of the world, and the corruptions of it ; so we might all be partakers of the divine nature in Christ Jesus, and of all spiritual blessings in him, to whom the kingdom, dominion, and government belong for ever.

There still remains a weighty concern upon us, for the whole church to labour and travail in deep humility, self-denial, and fervent supplication to the God and Father of all our mercies, that we be at peace among ourselves, and follow those things which make for peace and concord in all the churches of Christ ; whereby we may enjoy consolation in him, and the comfort of true love. For this end be very watchful against the contrary spirit and work of division, that there may not be any breach, schism, or discord amongst us. The Lord is one ; and his name, power, and spirit one ; and he hath called us to be one, in charity, in principle, and in practice. Let us all therefore diligently follow and pursue the same, according to the degrees of that divine grace, wisdom and understanding given us of God, through the dear Son of his love, Jesus Christ, our only Mediator. And let

* ISAIA. xxxiii. 16.

† ROM. xvi. 20.

us all diligently follow him, and his example, in his divine light and spirit, wherein Satan (the adversary, the devil, the murderer and divider) hath no place; that the power of Christ Jesus, in whom the prince of the world hath nothing, may reign over all for ever; to whose name and power every knee must bow, and tongue confess. We pray God that Friends every where may truly reverence his name and power, and be mindful of his kingdom and government over all.

In this our annual assembly our God hath been near to help and counsel us, as in humility and the meekness of wisdom we have been willing to attend upon him; who, in his goodness, hath graciously shined upon this our great solemnity, and brought many into more amity and love, and to better understanding and nearness in spirit, than for some time past. Blessed be the God of love and peace, for all his kindnesses and favours towards us.

We think it meet, as usual, to impart unto you the most material accounts, passages and counsels relating to the concerns of truth, good order and peace in the churches of Christ, necessary at this time; which are as follow.

By those Friends who came up to this meeting from the several counties of England and Wales, as also from Scotland and Ireland, as well as by divers epistles from foreign parts; viz. Maryland, Pennsylvania, East and West-Jersey, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, Holland and Frederickstadt, and likewise from some faithful Friends and brethren, who lately have travelled in truth's service in divers parts of America; we have good and comfortable accounts of the prosperity of truth, of the unity there is generally among Friends, and the great readiness and openness in many places, both in England and foreign parts, to hear the testimony of the gospel declared unto them.

The sufferings of Friends, brought in this year from England and Wales, do amount unto four thousand nine hundred pounds and upwards, for tithes, and those called church-rates, &c. But chiefly on account of the former.

We understand also, that although, since last Yearly Meeting, nine Friends have been discharged from imprisonment, there yet remain nine others prisoners in divers parts of England, mostly on account of tithes; and one Friend hath died a prisoner.

A tender concern being upon the spirits of many brethren, for the keeping up our ancient testimonies in the truth against pride, and the vain fashions and customs of the world; it is desired and advised, that Friends in all places (in the wisdom of God) endeavour to train up their children in the fear of the Lord, and be good examples to them, in keeping to the cross of Christ, both in plainness of habit and speech; and that none do countenance or

connive at them, in going from the ancient simplicity of the truth, in which we have appeared as a people called of God, to bear testimony to his name; nor make light of those testimonies, which by our ancient Friends (who trod out the way before us) were borne through great perils and dangers, to the hazarding the lives and estates of many; the weight of whose exercises remains fresh upon the minds of a remnant, to the stirring up of a godly zeal in them against all false liberty, and sinful ease in the flesh, which is too apt to grow among some professing the same truth with us, in this our day, for want of due watchfulness and obedience to the light of Christ, and keeping low and humble before the Lord; by reason whereof, many evils get in amongst us; viz. Pride of apparel: making of mixt marriages with persons of contrary judgment; bowing, and giving flattering titles to men; the saying of ye, or you, to a single person; and calling the days of the week, and the months, by heathen names, to the declining of truth's testimony, and giving occasion of stumbling to such as are seeking after the knowledge of the same, as it is in Jesus. These things are cause of sorrow of heart and trouble to the Israel of God; yea, cause of great mourning; and call for humiliation and amendment in the camp of God; that every evil and hurtful thing being cast out, truth may prevail, and the professors thereof may stand faithfully against all snares and temptations; that the blessing of God, in which there is no sorrow, may rest upon and abound in the whole church of Christ.

And that our children may be preserved from the wiles of Satan, as much as in us lies, let a godly care and concern be upon the minds of all parents to watch over them, with supplications to the Lord, that they be not drawn away from the innocency, simplicity, and plainness of the way of truth; and labour, in a sense of truth, to reach the witness in them, that they may feel in their own spirits a degree of fear and reverence towards God; and instruct them to follow his counsel, and obey his voice; as the tribes of Israel were required of God to teach his precepts diligently unto their children, DEUT. vi. ver. 7. "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." So be you concerned to acquaint them how the Lord led you from one degree of faithfulness to another, in a denial of the world's corrupt ways, language and customs; which while we (in disobedience to him) walked in, we could not enjoy true peace: but as we bore the cross, and bowed to his will, we had an evidence of acceptance with him. And be careful, that none of you, by

a neglect herein, become examples unto them to depart from the Scripture language, wherein is true propriety of speech.

And let none exercise rule or government in the church as elders or overseers, but such who are unblameable in conversation and example, free from covetousness, over-reaching, oppression and extortion, &c. persons of good report; even among those who are without; following those things so earnestly recommended by the holy apostles Paul and Peter. PHILIP. ii. 3. "Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." 1 PET. v. 2, 3. "Feed the flock of God which is among you; taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

And as the blessed truth we profess teacheth us to do justly unto all men, in all things; even so, more especially, in a faithful subjection to the government, in all godliness and honesty, continuing to render unto the king what is his due, in taxes and customs payable to him according to law.

The Lord our God, who, for the sake of his heritage, hath often heretofore rebuked and limited the raging waves of the sea, hath (blessed be his name) mercifully dispersed the cloud threatening a storm, which lately seemed to hang over us; which, together with the favour God hath given us in the eyes of the king and government, for the free enjoyment of our religious and civil liberties, calls for true thankfulness to him.

And humbly to pray to Almighty God for the king, and those in authority, for his and their safety and defence, is certainly our christian duty, as well as to walk inoffensively, as a grateful people, towards them.

Finally, dear Friends and brethren, be careful to be at peace among yourselves; to live in love and concord, and keep your meetings therein in the authority of that divine power wherein they were first erected.

And the God of love and peace be with you all, and rule among you by the spirit of his dear Son Christ Jesus. To whom the glory, the kingdom, and government over all, belong for ever.

Signed in and on the behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING,

EPISTLE XXXIX—1716.

Tenderly beloved Friends and Brethren,

We humbly beseech and supplicate our heavenly Father, that sincere love and true peace may increase and abound more and more in all the churches of Christ, and the whole family and heritage of God, in this and all other nations where his blessed work of restoration is begun; knowing, that as these do increase and abound, through sincere obedience to the divine unction received from the Holy One in and among us, there will be the less occasion for the frequent repetition or addition of outward direction; the royal law of love being written in the heart.

Dear Friends,

We have very great cause to be humbly thankful to Almighty God for his many providences over us, and particularly for being delivered from the great miseries and calamities with which these nations were threatened by the late rebellion.

By the accounts received this year, the sufferings of Friends in England and Wales are four thousand six hundred thirty pounds and upwards, chiefly on account of tithes and church-rates; so called; and that there are nineteen Friends now prisoners, and one deceased a prisoner since last year.

We think meet to communicate to you, that we have received divers good and comfortable accounts at this meeting, as well by Friends come up from the several counties of England and Wales, as also by several epistles from Scotland, Ireland, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Rhode-Island, Amsterdam, Harlinhen and Frederickstadt, that Friends in general are preserved in love, and truth prospers in divers parts, and that there is an openness in the minds of people to hear truth's testimony delivered in Friends' meetings, and some conviction.

The consideration of which weighs with us to recommend to our brethren a steady progress in the truth, and a prudent inoffensive conduct and demeanour one towards another in all respects; that no just offence may be given to any upon any account, according to former advices from this meeting, to which we refer; and particularly to the matters contained in the minute of the last Yearly Meeting, for walking charitably and tenderly one towards another, and not judging one another in the case therein mentioned, recommended in writing to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings: which minute we advise may be therein read, and entered in your meeting-books, that the same may be effectually put in practice; and that report thereof be made to the next Yearly Meeting.

Finally, dear Friends, brethren, and sisters, all of you have a godly care of judging or contradicting one another in public meetings, or shewing any marks or signs of division therein, among ministers or others; that being of very pernicious consequence, to bring blame or contempt upon the ministry, and a great hurt to our youth and others. Wherefore all be very careful to shew a good example of sobriety, gravity and sincerity, sound doctrine and speech that cannot be condemned; giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry may not in any wise be blamed; but all gainsayers be ashamed, and truth kept in dominion in all your solemnities. Our dear and worthy Friend and brother, George Fox, hath given the like advice and caution more fully, in the collection of his epistles, folios 92 and 300, to which you are referred.

And for the sake of good order and christian love one towards another in the church, as members one of another, the strong ought with compassion both to help and bear the infirmities of the weak. For we have weak brethren in the church; towards whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath bowels of compassion, and in the spirit of love and meekness would have them seasonably helped and strengthened by their elder and stronger brethren; as he has been compassionate, and hath forgiven and helped them in times of need.

And that gospel order may be carefully maintained and followed, according to the precept and doctrine of Christ and his holy apostles, we recommend to your serious notice and observation the following scriptures; viz.

MAT. xviii. 15. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother, &c." Ver. 16, 17. Agreeable to the Mosaical law, in LEVITICUS xix. 17, 18. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin to lie upon him [or, as in the margin, "that thou bear not sin for him."] "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. I am the Lord."

GAL. vi. 1. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one, in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

JAMES v. 19, 20. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

2 COR. vi. 3, 4. "Giving no offence in any thing, that the

“ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving ourselves
“as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, &c.”

2 TIM. ii. 24, 25. “And the servant of the Lord must not
“strive, but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach; patient (or
“forbearing); in meekness instructing those that oppose them-
“selves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the
“acknowledging of the truth.”

ROM. xv. 5, 6. “Now the God of patience and consolation
“grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to
“(or after the example of) Christ; that ye may with one mind
“and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus
“Christ.”

2 THESS. iii. 14, 15, 16. “And if any man obey not our word
“by this epistle (i. e. of Paul’s), note that man, and have no com-
“pany with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not
“as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

“Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all
“means. The Lord be with you all.”

Signed in and on the behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XL—1717.

Our salutation, in the love of Christ Jesus, our blessed Lord, is freely extended unto you; whose tender care over, and mercy to, this our annual assembly, we do humbly and thankfully acknowledge, in the love, amity, tender condescension, and peaceable procedure thereof, with respect to the divine power and goodness of the Lord our God, and the service of his church and people; sincerely desiring the prosperity of his whole heritage, even in all the churches of Christ among us, in his dear love, unity, and peace, to his eternal glory, and our universal comfort and perpetual joy in the kingdom of the dear Son of God.

We are truly comforted, in that we understand there is such a general concurrence and union among Friends with our former earnest desires and counsel for true and universal love, unity, peace, and good order, to be earnestly endeavoured and maintained among us, as a peculiar people, chosen of the Lord out of the world, to bear a faithful testimony to his holy name and truth, in all respects; and that all that is contrary be watched against and avoided (as strife, discord, contention, and disputes tending to

divisions), and utterly suppressed and laid aside, as the light and righteous judgment of truth require.

Oh! that all the churches and congregations of the faithful would be excited, by the spirit of the dear Son of God, fervently to pray for the prosperity of his church and people throughout the world; that Sion may more and more shine in the beauty of holiness, to the glory and praise of the King of Glory.

The Friends and brethren, come up from the several Quarterly Meetings in this nation, have given a good account to this meeting of truth's prosperity, and that Friends are generally in love and unity one with another. And by several epistles from Friends of North-Carolina, Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Barbadoes, Holland, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, which have been read in this meeting; as also by verbal accounts, given by several Friends that have lately travelled in divers parts of America, and elsewhere; we have received comfortable accounts of the state of truth and Friends in those parts; by which we are encouraged to hope truth prevails in many places, and a concern grows upon Friends for the prosperity thereof; and that there is an inclination in people to hear the truth declared.

By the accounts brought up this year, we find that Friends' sufferings in England and Wales amount to five thousand two hundred and ninety pounds and upwards, chiefly for tithes, priests' wages, and steeple-house rates; and that notwithstanding there have been four Friends discharged the last year, there yet remain twenty Friends prisoners on these accounts.

We advise, that a tender care remain upon Friends in all places, to be faithful in keeping up our christian testimony against tithes; as being fully persuaded, it is that whereunto God hath called his people in this our day; we seeing by daily experience, that such as are not faithful therein, do thereby add to the suffering of honest Friends, and hinder their own growth and prosperity in the most blessed truth.

As touching the education of Friends' children, for which this meeting has often found a concern; we think it our duty to recommend unto you the necessity that there is of a care in preserving of them in plainness of speech and habit, suitable to our holy profession; and also, that no opportunity be omitted, nor any endeavours wanting, to instruct them in the PRINCIPLE of TRUTH which we profess; that thereby they, being sensible of the operation thereof in themselves, may find not only their spirits softened and tendered, fit to receive the impressions of the divine image, but may also from thence find themselves under a necessity to appear clear in the several branches of our christian testimony. And as this will be most beneficial to them, being

the fruits of conviction, so it is the most effectual way of propagating the same throughout the churches of Christ. And there being times and seasons wherein their spirits are (more than at others) disposed to have those things impressed upon them; so we desire that all parents, and others concerned in the oversight of youth, might wait, in the fear of God, to know themselves divinely qualified for that service; that in his wisdom they may make use of every opportunity which the Lord shall put into their hands. And we do hereby warn and advise Friends in all places, to flee every appearance of evil; and keep out of pride, and following the vain fashions and customs of this world, as recommended in the epistle of 1715.

And as we always found it our concern to recommend love, concord, and unity in the churches of Christ every where, so, as a mean to effect the same, we earnestly desire that Friends, but more especially such as are concerned in meetings of business, do labour to know their own spirits subjected by the spirit of truth; that thereby being "baptized into one body," they may be truly one in the foundation of their love and unity, and that therein they may all labour to find a nearness to each other in spirit; this being the true way to a thorough reconciliation, where ever there is or may have been any difference of apprehension; thereby Friends will be preserved in that sweetness of spirit, that is and will be the bond of true peace throughout all the churches of Christ.

And, dear Friends; the Friends of this meeting, to whom the inspection of the accounts was referred, made report, that having perused the same, they found the stock to be near expended; whereupon this meeting thinks it necessary to recommend unto you, that a general and free contribution be made in every county, and that what shall be thereupon collected be sent up to the respective correspondents.

Finally, dear Friends and brethren, be careful to walk unblameably in love and peace among yourselves, and towards all men in christian charity; and be humbly thankful to the Lord, our most gracious God, for the favour he hath given us in the eyes of the king and civil government, in the peaceable enjoyment of our religious and christian liberties under them; and the God of peace (we trust) will be with you to the end.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits. Amen.

Signed in and on the behalf, and by the order, of this Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING

EPISTLE XLI—1718.

Dear and well beloved Friends and Brethren,

This our solemn assembly recommends our sincere love and salutation, in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, unto you, and to all his churches every where, to whom this epistle may be communicated.

We think it meet to remind you, that the intent and holy design of our annual assemblies, in their first constitution, were for a great and weighty oversight and christian care of the affairs of the churches pertaining to our holy profession and christian communion; that good order, true love, unity and concord may be faithfully followed and maintained among all of us, as a peculiar people, called and chosen out of the world, and the errors and corruptions thereof; knowing also, that sincere love, and union in general, will be a great cause of truth's prosperity among ourselves, and of the prevalency thereof over the world and the spirit of it. All which seriously considered, we sincerely desire, and humbly hope, that God will graciously please more and more to put it into the hearts of Friends and brethren, to be zealously concerned that universal love, true union, peace, and concord be followed and maintained in all the churches of Christ; and all the contrary, as enmity, division, discord, and strife, watched against and shut out for ever; that the power and peace of our God may prevail and rule in all hearts more and more, whereunto we are called in one body; that the God of love and peace may be with us for ever: which is the earnest desire and travail of the souls of all the faithful.

The Friends and brethren of the several Quarterly Meetings in this nation, have given good accounts to this meeting of truth's prosperity in divers places, and that Friends are generally in love and unity one with another. And several epistles (viz. from Flushing in Long-Island, Rhode-Island, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Barbadoes, Amsterdam, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales) have been read in this our meeting; by which we understand, that truth prevails (many being convinced thereof), and that a concern grows upon faithful Friends for the further increase of it.

The account of sufferings we have received from the several counties in this nation, have been mostly for non-payment of tithes, priests' wages, and church-rates, so called; and do amount in the whole unto five thousand one hundred ninety-three pounds and upwards; and that there have been discharged since last year

five prisoners, and there do yet remain thirteen prisoners, mostly on account of tithes.

We beseech and exhort all Friends to be faithful in their christian testimony against those grand oppressions of tithes, priests' wages and all other things that truth alloweth not of; out of which the Lord hath called his people in this gospel day. For by experience we find, that to such who are not faithful therein, it tends to hinder their growth in the truth, and to add to the sufferings of faithful Friends.

And, dear Friends; it having frequently been recommended, that Friends should be diligent in providing schools for the education of their youth; not only in useful and necessary learning, but also to bring them up in the fear of God, and in a sense of his holy life upon their spirits, and in frequent reading the Holy Scriptures, and other good books; so we have accounts from divers parts of this kingdom, that Friends are in the practice thereof, and have had good success on their endeavours therein; yet we have also accounts, that there is in some places want of schools. And (as hath been advised in the epistle of this meeting, Anno 1709,) "Where Friends want ability, their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings are desired to assist them, that the children of the poor may have due help of education, instruction, and necessary learning; and that the children both of rich and poor may be early provided with industrious employments, that they may not grow up in idleness, looseness and vice; but that, being thus seasoned with the truth, sanctioned of God, and taught our holy, self-denying way, they may appear a reputation to our holy profession, the comfort of their honest parents, instrumental to the glory of God, and the good of the generation coming on."

And, dear Friends; with respect to the poor among us it ought to be considered, that the poor (both parents and children) are of our family, and ought not to be turned off to any others, to be either supported or educated. And although some may think the poor a burden; yet remember, where our poor are well provided for, and walk orderly, they are an ornament to our society; and the rich should consider, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and that "He who gives to the poor, lends to the Lord," who will repay it again,

And we beseech all Friends (and in an especial manner all such who are active members in the church, and who seem to have a great place and interest therein) to wait diligently upon the Lord for the "Wisdom which comes down from above;" that in the meekness of that wisdom they may act for God, and for the good of his church and people; and not in an overly, talkative, and

disorderly spirit. And that all such be exemplary in seasonably and constantly keeping to Week-day Meetings, as well as First-day; and such as have children and families, in bringing them, as much as may be, with them; that they may be good examples to the flock therein; and not, by their indifferency and negligence, be a stumbling-block in the way of others.

And as caution has often been given against the growing evil of pride, so it hath been a concern upon this meeting to renew the same; and (by a particular epistle from this meeting on that occasion) they have given caution and advice thereon; and directed that printed copies thereof be sent to each family of Friends; to which epistle we refer.

And, dear Friends and brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ, our holy head, and heavenly law-giver, by whom we are united into one body, through the power and virtue of the holy spirit; (being by the most merciful kindness of God, under the renewed sense of his divine life and love, which has overshadowed this our annual assembly, to our great comfort and satisfaction, for which we are humbly thankful to him); we heartily desire your prosperity in the blessed truth, and increase in the unity of the faith, and that we may "strive together therein for the hope of the "gospel."

To conclude; we tenderly recommend you all to the God of love and peace, that his divine power and peaceable wisdom may rule and reign over all; that therein all your affairs may be ordered, to his glory, and your comfort and peace in Christ Jesus; and nothing done through strife and contention, or vain-glory, murmuring, or disputing; but in the spirit of meekness, love, and humility, carry yourselves toward one another; and the younger brethren endeavour to know their places, as living members of one body, and preserve a due regard to their elders in Christ Jesus.

The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Signed in and on the behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by
BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XLII—1719.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the love of Christ, our holy head and law-giver, we dearly salute you, in a living sense of the Lord's great and gracious goodness which he hath been pleased to renew upon the spirits of many in this our Yearly Meeting; for which we are humbly

thankful unto the God and Father of all our mercies; wishing the increase of all spiritual blessings in the churches every where, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

And since, through the merciful providence of the Lord our God toward us his people, the churches among us have rest and quiet; our sincere desire is, that all may make a true and faithful improvement thereof, to his glory, and the churches edification, in the one living faith, true love and concord; as the primitive churches, when they had rest, were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, were multiplied by the comfort of the Holy Ghost.*

For good order, union and concord, and to shun all occasions of strife and discord, and for speedy ending all differences, we hope you have not need of particular and renewed advice, if the ancient counsel, advices and cautions, given in many of our Yearly epistles,† be sincerely observed and duly put in practice, in your Monthly and Quarterly Meetings; still preferring the law of the spirit of life in yourselves, as a remaining obligation upon your spirits to continue in the practice of that pure and christian religion, which we are called unto by the grace of God.

And, dear Friends; we have received divers epistles from Friends in foreign parts; viz. from North-Carolina, Antigua, the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Long-Island, Maryland, Virginia, Rhode-Island, Barbadoes, Frederickstadt, Amsterdam, and Ireland; as also from Friends of North-Britain and Wales; wherein are contained good accounts of the love and unity of Friends in general, of the prosperity of truth, and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ in divers parts. Blessed be the name of the Lord our God.

The comfortable accounts which also have been given to this meeting, by Friends from the several Quarterly Meetings, &c. in South-Britain, of love and concord in general, and of the progress of the work of God, and good dispositions of people in divers parts to hear the gospel of the kingdom preached, in the demonstration of the spirit, and in power, cannot but be very affecting to us.

Dear Friends,

As our testimony hath ever been, and still is, against the defrauding the king of any of his customs, duties, or excise, buying goods reasonably suspected to be run, exporting of wool, or any other goods prohibited by law, or doing any other thing whatsoever to the injury of the king's revenues, or of the common good, or to the hurt of the fair trader; so if any person or per-

* Acts ix. 31.

† Yearly epistles of 1693, 1696, and others, referred to.

sons, under our name and profession, shall be known to be guilty of these, or any other such crimes and offences, we do earnestly advise the respective Monthly Meetings to which such offenders belong, that they severely reprehend and testify against such offenders, and their unwarrantable, clandestine and unlawful actions; and admonish them to make restitution for the wrong done to the government, and to the holy truth professed by us.

By the accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales this year, the sufferings of Friends do amount unto four thousand six hundred and twenty pounds, and upwards; which appear to have been chiefly on account of tithes, and church-rates, so called; and that there are sixteen Friends now prisoners, mostly on account of tithes, and one prisoner discharged since last year.

And in order that our ancient and christian testimony against tithes, and church-rates so called, may be fully kept up, our advice is, that Friends in all places be faithful therein: and that the advices formerly given by the Yearly Meeting, concerning such as receive or pay tithes, may be duly observed and put in practice.

At this our meeting we being given to understand, that in divers places there are some who profess the truth with us, who deviate from the way thereof, by contracting of marriages with such as are not of our society, contrary to the repeated advice of this meeting, to the dishonour of our holy profession, and the hindrance of truth's prosperity; in order therefore that a stop may be put to an undue liberty in such marriages, and the evil consequences thereof, we do hereby tenderly advise and desire, that all parents and guardians of children do take especial care, as much as in them lieth, to prevent their children from running into such marriages: and that Friends of each Particular Meeting, as also of the Monthly Meetings, to which such persons belong, do, in the wisdom and power of truth, use their endeavours to put a stop to the said evil, by admonishing such as may attempt to marry as aforesaid, to desist before they accomplish the same. But if they refuse to take counsel, or privately go on to marry as aforesaid, that then such persons be dealt withal according to the good order of truth, and judgment fixed upon all such as take such an undue liberty.

It is matter of sorrow and grief to us, that notwithstanding the good advice and counsel formerly given from this meeting against pride, yet it appears in many places there is not that due regard had to the counsel given as ought to be. Wherefore it is again advised, that such parents and guardians, who have the care and oversight of children, be first concerned to be good examples to them. Secondly, be careful to train them up in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord; and be concerned to have the sense of truth on your own spirits; otherwise you cannot bring them to a sense of truth on their spirits; and without that, your work will be but of small advantage. But if you find truth hath hold of their minds, then have you a help in them to work with you against those youthful inclinations to vanity.

And, dear Friends; let those just and ancient commands of God be duly observed; viz. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people. Thou shalt not raise a false report." Wherefore, in the fear of the Lord, stand against jealousies and evil surmisings, as well as against all whisperers, backbiters, tale-bearers and defamers, and endeavour to put a speedy stop thereto; for their wicked practices and works of darkness tend to division and discord, and greatly weaken our love and unity, and many times injure the reputation of the innocent; and the righteous law of God goes against both the authors and encouragers thereof. And therefore, if you hear a report of a Friend, be careful not to report it again; but go to the person of whom the report is, and inquire if it be true, or not; and if it be true, then deal with such person for it, according to the doctrine of Christ, MATTH. xviii. but if false, then endeavour, as much as in you lies, to stop such reports; for, as Solomon saith, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."*

And for the better reminding and observing the sundry advices of this meeting to the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, it is desired, that the said several meetings do commit the epistles of this meeting, whether printed or written, to the custody of some suitable and able Friend; to whom Friends may have recourse as occasion requires; or they may be read in meetings at suitable opportunities.

And, dear Friends; there remains a caution upon our spirits to all under our holy profession, and in a particular manner when assembled for the affairs of the church, that "the wrath of man, which worketh not the righteousness of God," may be kept down, together with all exaltedness of spirit: and that, on the contrary, the meekness and wisdom of the Lord may govern all Friends, and they in that carry on and perform the affairs of the church; whereby the many and great evils which attend wrath and exaltedness will be suppressed and prevented.

And it is desired, that the epistles and accounts of the affairs of truth sent to this meeting, from Yearly, Quarterly, and Monthly Meetings, may, if possible, be read and approved in the respec-

* PROV. xxii. 1.

five meetings from whence they are sent, before they are signed on the behalf of the meetings.

Finally, dear Friends, we earnestly exhort you, every where in all your meetings, to retire inward, unto the gift of God in yourselves, therein to feel your minds truly engaged to seek the promotion and advancement of the truth, and the testimony of it, which we are called to bear ; that, being as a city set on a hill, our lights may so shine among men, that he, the great God, who hath called us, may have the praise and glory of all his great and marvellous works.

So the God of love and peace be with you, and keep and preserve you all under the conduct of his peaceable wisdom, and guidance of his holy Spirit.

Read and approved in the said Meeting, and signed in and on the behalf of the same, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XLIII—1720.

Beloved Friends, Brethren, and Sisters,

In that dear and tender love we have received in Christ Jesus, our Lord, this assembly salutes you; and as you and we are all called into one body by his holy spirit of life and grace, so we humbly desire for ever to continue, to his glory and our peace, in him who hath called us, that we may be true and faithful subjects under his peaceable government ; that he, who is the prince of life and peace, may ever rule and reign among us, as a peculiar people, and holy church and inheritance, which he has gathered for the same end. And we pray God to prosper his work of righteousness in the earth, and make his enemies the footstool of his anointed Son, whose right it is to rule and govern. Amen.

Beloved Friends,

We would put you in remembrance, that the dispensation of the new covenant, which we are called unto, is a dispensation of light, life, love, grace, peace, and unity of spirit in Christ Jesus ; which covenant allows of no animosities, injuries, divisions, schisms, or enmity, but enjoins all sincerely to observe the great commandment and duty of love, charity, and good will ; which being truly observed, there will be peace, concord, and harmony among all who are children of that covenant, which is never to be forgotten.

We have received epistles from Virginia, Rhode-Island, Long-

Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland, South-Carolina, Barbadoes, Antigua, Jamaica, Amsterdam, Frederickstadt, and Ireland; as also from North-Britain and Wales; and although, in some few places, the account is not so encouraging as could be desired, yet they express their earnest desire that Friends in the love of God might be stirred up to visit them. But generally they give account of the openness there is in many places to hear the testimony of truth, and of the progress and prosperity thereof.

Also the accounts brought up from the several counties in South-Britain, of love and concord among Friends in general, and of the progress of the work of God in divers parts, and of people's good disposition to hear the gospel of the kingdom preached, were acceptable to us.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year amount unto four thousand six hundred and ninety pounds, and upwards; which appear to be chiefly on account of tithes and church-rates, so called: and that there are eleven Friends now prisoners, most on the same accounts; nine Friends (prisoners) have been discharged since last year, and two Friends have died prisoners.

Friends, in the respective counties and meetings, are earnestly desired and advised, that they use prudence and caution, so as not to be imposed upon by impostors, or cheats, pretending to the ministry, or otherwise. And where there is doubt or question of the ministry of any persons, in that case, that such be called upon to shew what certificates they have; and in general, it is tenderly recommended to the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, to see that Friends who travel in the work of the ministry do go in the unity of the meetings to which they belong, and with certificates therefrom.

And further, that it may become the tender care of the said several meetings, to watch over such as may be young in the ministry, to see that they walk humbly and wisely; that as, on the one hand, nothing truly tending to the glory of God, and the edification of his church and people, may be discouraged; so, on the other hand, where any thing appears which may make advice necessary, that the elders of the church, both ministers and others, do, in the wisdom of God, give their advice thereupon, with due regard to the state of weakness and childhood that such may be under.

As mercy, compassion, and charity are eminently required in this new covenant dispensation we are under; so, respecting the poor and indigent among us, and to see there be no beggar in our Israel, it is the concurrent advice of this meeting that all poor Friends be taken due care of, and none of them sent to the parish to be relieved; that nothing be wanting for their necessary sup-

ply; which has been according to our ancient practice and testimony. And it has long been of good report, that we have not only maintained our own poor, but also contributed our share to the poor of the respective parishes wherein we dwell.

Whereupon it is agreed by this meeting, that to the questions already put in our Yearly Meeting, this be added; viz.

How are the poor Friends among you taken care of?

Let all promises and obligations for payment of just debts be truly kept and performed; and due care taken that all offences, trespasses, and differences be speedily ended and composed, in God's wisdom, according to gospel order among us, either by mutual forgiveness, christian counsel, or just arbitration, as the case may require, and safely admit or allow; and the choice of arbitrators and umpires be of such just, impartial men, as neither party can justly except against, but both agree to their choice.

As our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ exhorted and warned to beware and take heed of covetousness (which is idolatry), we are concerned that all professing christianity among us may take heed of pride, covetousness, and hastening to be rich in the world, which are pernicious and growing evils; let them be watched against, resisted, and suppressed, in the fear and dread of Almighty God, and have no place or countenance in his camp. O ye grave elders, both men and women! pray be careful and watchful against these evils, and over the youth in these cases.

It is also seriously advised, that no Friends suffer romances, play books, or other vain and idle pamphlets in their houses or families, which tend to corrupt the minds of youth; but, instead thereof, that they excite them to the reading of the holy scriptures, and religious books.

Let the holy scriptures be early taught our youth, and diligently searched, and seriously read by Friends, with due regard to the holy Spirit, from whence they came, and by which they are truly opened; for they contain excellent doctrine, rules and precepts, divine and moral: insomuch that there will be no need to enumerate, or often to repeat laws or precepts, like the Jews, under a literal and lower dispensation and covenant than we are called into. The true practice of the pure religion given us will answer all.

Now let us all be humbly thankful to our most merciful God, for the favour he hath given us in the eyes of the king and government, under whom we enjoy our present peaceable religious liberty.

Finally, dear Friends, brethren, and sisters, farewell, farewell in Christ Jesus. Live in love and peace; and the God

of love and peace, and of all our mercies, be with you all. Amen.

Signed in and on the behalf of the said Meeting, and by order thereof, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XLIV—1721.

Truly beloved Friends, Brethren, and Sisters,

This our annual and solemn assembly salutes you, in the love of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and law-giver, who first loved us, that we should truly love him, and one another; and the more manifest our love to him by our godly care and love to his lambs and sheep; watching against all causes of division and reproach, as tending to the dishonour of his glorious name, and our holy profession. Therefore,

Let us all labour to promote true charity and fervent love among ourselves; which is the bond of perfectness, and has been in a good measure experienced among us in this meeting; and, with the holy apostle, fervently pray, that sincere love may abound yet more and more, in divine knowledge, and in all true judgment.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year, from the several Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales, do amount unto four thousand seven hundred and seventy pounds and upwards; which appear to be chiefly on account of tithes and church-rates, so called; and that there are at present five Friends prisoners, mostly on those accounts; notwithstanding there have been seven discharged since last year.

By accounts brought up from the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in this nation, as well as by epistles this year from our Friends and brethren of Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Maryland, South-Carolina, the two Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Antigua, Barbadoes, and Amsterdam, we have received comfortable relations of the prosperity of truth in divers places, and a readiness in sober neighbours to hear the lively testimonies thereof, and some inclining to join with Friends in the strait and narrow way that leads to life.

And whereas Friends were weightily concerned to advise and caution, in the last Yearly Epistle, all professing truth with us to take heed of pride, covetousness, and hastening to be rich in this world, as pernicious and growing evils; which advice having

not been duly regarded by some, who have unwarily been drawn into such things as have tended not only to the dishonour of God, but also to their own loss and sorrow;

We therefore find ourselves now again concerned earnestly to press all Friends to be diligent in the observation thereof; and to intreat that such, who may have been so misled, may come to a due sense of it, and sincerely repent.

And whereas, in our Epistle of 1719, we did earnestly caution against defrauding the king of his customs, duties, or excise, or encouraging such clandestine practices, by buying goods reasonably suspected to be run; in which advice this meeting having in that epistle been very-particular, doth refer thereunto, and press the same again; and that Friends do honestly and chearfully pay their tributes to the government, under which they enjoy protection. And as we warn against the injustice aforesaid, so likewise against all the provoking sins of the age, which draw down the heavy judgments of God.

We further desire, that all Friends may take care to bring their business and outward concerns into as narrow compass as possible, and make their wills and settlements in the time of health, as hath formerly been advised by this meeting.

And inasmuch as this meeting did so earnestly recommend, in their said Epistle of 1719, for Friends to be very careful of hurting one another in their unity and reputation; which advice we judge to be of great importance, and very necessary to be maintained and put in practice, yet hath not been so duly observed; we do therefore again recommend the same as followeth:

‘And dear Friends, let those just and ancient commands of God be duly observed, viz. “Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people. Thou shalt not raise a false report.”* ‘Wherefore, in the fear of the Lord, stand against jealousies and evil surmisings, as well as against all whisperers, backbiters, tale-bearers, and defamers, and endeavour to put a speedy stop thereto; for their wicked practices and works of darkness tend to division and discord, and greatly weaken our love and unity, and many times injure the reputation of the innocent; and the righteous law of God goes against both the authors and encouragers thereof. And therefore, if you hear a report of a Friend, be careful not to report it again, but go to the person of whom the report is, and enquire if it be true or not; and if it be true, then deal with such person for it according to the doctrine of Christ, MATT. xviii; but if false, then endeavour, as much as in you lies, to stop such reports; for, as Sole-

* LEV. xix. 16. Exop. xxiii. 1.

‘ mon saith, “ A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.”†

The universal perfection and beauty of the church of Christ all ought to believe, hope, and pay for. Oh! that Sion may shine, and the Gentiles see her righteousness, and all kings the brightness of her glory! Let her be a crown and royal diadem in the hand of the Lord our God. This is the perfection and glory promised to the true spouse and church of Christ, and it is the desire of every faithful member to have a lasting share therein.

In true christian charity and good-will to all, we recommend you to him, who is able to establish and preserve you according to the gospel of peace; and to do for us above all we can ask or think. To whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Farewell. Your Friends and brethren, &c.

Signed in and on the behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

BENJAMIN BEALING.

EPISTLE XLV—1722.

Sincerely beloved Friends and Brethren,

This assembly tenderly salutes you in that true love we have in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom we desire grace, mercy, and peace may increase and be multiplied unto all who love his appearance, and are truly careful that soundness in faith, love, charity, good works, and christian order be promoted, held and maintained in the church of Christ.

This our solemn assembly, with the affairs properly pertaining thereto, hath been held and managed in great love and peace, to our comfort: and living praises, with humble thanksgiving, have been therein rendered unto our merciful God, through his dear Son Jesus Christ, for his tender mercies, and privileges we enjoy respecting our religious and civil liberties.

And, dear Friends; we cannot but with great humility acknowledge the goodness of God, in disposing the legislature to grant us, the last session of parliament, such form of affirmation, as, by accounts received, we find very satisfactory to all the brethren; for which we are truly thankful to God, and those in authority. And as we are well satisfied with the care of Friends in London, in their addressing the king thereupon, and thankful for his excellent and favourable answer, so also with their care in writing and dispersing the late epistle of caution concerning the

† PROV. xxii. 1.

use thereof. Which good advice this meeting recommends with the greatest earnestness, that there be no other than an honest and conscientious use made of this farther indulgence granted to us.

And, dear Friends ; As the united solicitation for this ease ought to be esteemed a token of the goodness of God, and to which the success we have been blessed with is greatly owing ; so we earnestly desire that all Friends will thankfully embrace the present opportunity of cementing in a very close and brotherly fellowship one with another in the divine spirit, and therein watch against all occasions of discord or breach of unity in any Quarterly, Monthly, or Particular Meeting ; to the end Zion may continue a quiet habitation, the glory and presence of God rest and remain on her, and the spirit and doctrine of the gospel may be lived in and maintained ; and then we need not doubt of seeing truth prevail in the earth in our days, and the glorious and spiritual kingdom of our blessed Redeemer established in the hearts of men.

Dear Friends,

The sum last collected for the service of Friends being laid out, by reason of the late sundry needful and considerable occasions of expense ; as reported to this meeting by the Friends to whom the inspection of the accounts was referred ; this meeting doth recommend, that a general, liberal, and speedy contribution be made by Friends in every county ; and that what shall be thereupon collected, be sent up to the respective correspondents.

The sufferings of Friends, which this year have been brought in from the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales, amount unto four thousand six hundred sixty-six pounds and upwards ; and do appear to be chiefly on account of tithes and church-rates, so called. There are at present eight Friends prisoners, mostly on account of tithes ; whereof three have been continued since the last year.

By the several accounts brought from the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in England, as also by accounts and epistles this year from our Friends and brethren of Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Maryland, South Carolina, Barbadoes, Amsterdam, and Frederickstadt, we have received comfortable relations of truth's prosperity in divers places, and a readiness in many to hear and receive the living testimony thereof : and some have come forth and joined with Friends in the strait and narrow way which leads to the kingdom ; and that divers of our youth, in several places, do walk as becomes the truth, and have their mouths opened in public testimony to declare the same.

We also recommend, that such Friends as are concerned in the affairs of the church, in the Quarterly, Monthly or Particular Meetings, be careful to act therein in the wisdom of God: whereby they will be exemplary to the young; who may be esteemed members thereof, and attend the same. And as such as young persons are found to be qualified with a real sense of truth on their spirits, and subjection thereunto, and thereby made capable to come up to a service in their respective meetings; Friends are desired to encourage and bring them forward therein; whereby they may be helpful to the ancients, and brought up in a life of righteousness, to walk and act to the praise of God's holy name; and standing in their lot, will supply the place of the elders in such meetings, through the same spirit, when they are gone.

And parents who have children to dispose of in marriage, are tenderly advised not to make it their first or chief care to obtain for them large portions and settlements of marriage: but rather be careful that their children be joined in marriage with persons of religious inclinations, suitable disposition, temper, sobriety of manners, and diligence in their business; which are things essentially necessary to a comfortable life in a married estate; and carefully to guard against all mixt marriages, and unequal yoking of their children therein.

Finally, dear brethren and sisters, we recommend you all to our most gracious God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, to preserve you in his love and peace; and humbly desire you may all continue therein with a godly care to discharge and keep a pure conscience, as christian examples in life and practice; that the God of love and peace may continue his presence with you. To whom be glory, dominion and praise, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever.

Signed in and on behalf of the said Meeting, by

ALEXANDER ARSCOTT,

Clerk of the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XLVI—1723.

Dearlly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the tender and true love of our Lord Jesus Christ, is our salutation renewed unto you: blessing our most gracious God for the continuance of his goodness, and manifold mercies; earnestly desiring your preservation and perseverance in the holy truth, to

his glory, and your peace and comfort, by an humble and faithful discharge of that christian care and trust which the Lord hath committed to you, for promoting and maintaining gospel order in all the churches of Christ.

By accounts which we have received from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by several epistles from our Friends and brethren of Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, and Holland, in Europe; and from Rhode-Island, Pennsylvania, East and West Jersey, Long-Island, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, and Barbadoes, in America; as also by the comfortable account of our Friends John Fothergill and Lawrence King, given to this meeting, of their late travels in most of the American places afore-mentioned; we are given to understand, that in divers parts a readiness appears in many to hear and receive the living testimony of truth; and that some have been added to the church.

Friends' sufferings, by accounts this year brought in from the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales, do amount unto four thousand three hundred and sixty-nine pounds and upwards; and do appear to be chiefly on account of tithes, and church-rates, so called. There are at present only two Friends prisoners on truth's account; and seven Friends have been discharged from imprisonment since last year. On which occasion we think meet to observe to you the goodness and mercy of God herein; for that it doth not appear so few Friends have been prisoners on truth's account, in any one year since we were a people, as are at this time. And we have no reason to believe otherwise, than that Friends are as faithful in their testimony as in former years.

And as we are deeply engaged to be humbly thankful to the God of all our mercies, and to the government; so we earnestly desire that Friends every where may live in love and peace; whereby christianity, in life and conversation, may shine among us, and be adorned by us.

Dear Friends,

You that have at heart the prosperity of truth in yourselves, and in your children, remember that it was the love of God, and the sense of his power and goodness, which at first bowed your hearts, to love, fear, and serve him, in walking in an holy conformity to the requirings of his blessed spirit. And where have you met with more of those enjoyments, than in the assemblies of his people, met together for divine worship?

Now, Friends, in these enjoyments are not your hearts enlarged to wish well to your posterity? Are there not fervent

desires in your souls, that those whom the Lord hath given to be yours, may also be the Lord's, and with you enjoy of his abundant blessings? Then be concerned to keep them to a constant, seasonable, and orderly frequenting as well of Week-day as of First-day meetings; instructing them to have their minds staid in the divine gift; to wait upon the Lord therein, to receive a portion with you of his spiritual favours; that they, from the tendering virtue of the holy Spirit, may be engaged in heart and mind to walk worthy of so great grace; and, in a holy zeal, to honour God, submit to bear the cross, endure the shame, and become public witnesses for him amongst the sons of men.

And dear Friends; this meeting considering that some in the present age do endeavour, as well by certain books, as a licentious conversation, to lessen and decry the true faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, even that precious faith once delivered to his saints; which by the mercy of God, is also bestowed upon us; do therefore earnestly advise and exhort all parents, masters and mistresses of families, and guardians of minors, that they prevent, as much as in them lies, their children, servants, and youth, under their respective care and tuition, from the having or reading books or papers, that have any tendency to prejudice the profession of the christian religion, to create in them the least doubt or question concerning the truth of the holy scriptures, or those necessary and saving truths declared in them; lest their infant and feeble minds should be poisoned thereby, and a foundation laid for the greatest evils.

And as parents have a natural right to approve of, and consent to, the marriage of their children; so this meeting doth earnestly desire that Friends' children would consult and advise with their parents and guardians in that great and weighty point, so essential to their happiness and comfort, before they let out their minds, or do entangle their affections; the too frequent examples that have happened to the contrary hereof, have caused lamentation in honest parents, and great affliction to themselves; which advice, now given, is agreeable to what hath been frequently recommended by this meeting; to which we refer.

And now, dear Friends, having thus recommended these few useful and necessary things unto your serious and weighty consideration and practice; we commit you to the divine aid and protection of our most gracious God, who is able and ready to build us up yet more and more a spiritual house unto himself, to his own glory. To whom, for the comforts of his blessed presence in these our annual assemblies, as well as other meetings, which are not the least of his manifold blessings, be dominion and praise,

through our Lord Jesus Christ; who alone is worthy, now and for ever.

Signed in and on behalf of the said Meeting, by

THOMAS BEAVEN,

Clerk of the meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XLVII—1724.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In a renewed sense of the love of God unto us in this our annual assembly we tenderly salute you; having been graciously attended with a favourable visitation of the spring of divine life and good will of God, evidently manifested in this meeting, to our great consolation in Christ; whereby we have been helped and abundantly encouraged in the performance of our duty and service to the Lord, for the promoting of his honour, and the good of his church and people. And therefore, in order to excite our Friends and brethren to a diligent and circumspect attention to the movings and leadings of the spirit of truth in themselves, and to promote the spreading and growth thereof in others, whereby such as walk answerable thereunto will be able to persevere therein, to their own and the church's comfort and satisfaction, do we hereby recommend to you the following particulars.

By accounts brought from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Barbadoes, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, and North and South Carolina, we understand an openness continues in divers places to hear the testimony of truth declared in our meetings; through which in the operation of the spirit, many have been reached, and confessed to the same, and some added to the church; and in several places a spring of living ministry is opened, to the comfort of Friends; whom we recommend in the spirit to make frequent supplication to the Lord of the harvest to raise many more faithful labourers, as instrumental means to replenish his church, and gather the people.

The sufferings of Friends this year amount to four thousand two hundred and four pounds, and upwards; mostly on account of tithes and church-rates, so called. There are at present three Friends prisoners on the account of tithes, and one discharged since last year.

And as we have often occasion to acquaint you of the repeated favours of the government to us here, we have also now to acquaint you of the extension of their favours to our Friends in Ireland

and Barbadoes, in granting them the same form of affirmation with us. We hope Friends every where will have a just and grateful sense on their minds of the same.

Dear Friends,

The circumstances of our youth having being again under our consideration, we judge it necessary to observe to you, that the undue liberty which too many of them take, both in their conversation one with another, as well as with those not of our persuasion, hath been cause of grief to know and hear; wherefore we tenderly recommend to all parents, and such as may have care of children, that they do, so far as in them lies, carefully inspect, and narrowly inquire into the manner of their conversation; that where counsel or reproof may be wanting, it may, in the spirit of love and in sound judgment, be given. Such care and inquiry, seasonably made, may tend to prevent ill-designing persons in their endeavours to entangle the affections of our youth in relation to marriage; the unhappy disobedience of some therein having frequently brought deep affliction on their tender parents, and misery on themselves. And on this occasion we again tenderly desire, that parents or guardians do not make earthly riches a chief view or cause of consent in marriage.

Dear Friends,

Though the concern of this meeting hath been often exercised to encourage the practice of a christian life, and to prevent disorders in conversation, or among the churches, which we doubt not have had some good effect; yet, inasmuch as many Friends are now grown up, who may not have taken notice of every of the said cautions, we therefore briefly hint at divers of them, and refer to the several epistles.

1. That Friends, in meetings of business, watch over their own spirits, that no indecent warmth get in, whereby the understanding may be hurried, and hindered from a regular judgment on the affairs before the meeting.

2. A caution against tithes, very often hinted.

3. For speedy ending differences by prudent and just arbitrations.

4. Cautions against pride in apparel; of which see a large epistle, dated the 5th of the Sixth Month, 1717.

5. Several times advices have been given to a diligent attending First-day and Week-day Meetings; yet, to our grief, there is now too much cause earnestly to renew the advice, which we tenderly do; and beseech all Friends, that though such meetings are sometimes held in silence, yet that they will not neglect their attendance at those meetings; for the hungry soul will labour for bread, and the thirsty for the water of life; and the diligent

hand will make rich in that treasure that is of an enduring substance.

6. A caution against imitating the vain custom of wearing or giving mourning; and all extravagant expences about the interment of the deceased.

And whereas, in this time of general ease and liberty, too many under our profession have launched forth into the things of this world beyond their substance, and capacities to discharge a good conscience in the performance of their promises and contracts, as well as their just debts, to the great scandal of our holy profession, and involving of themselves, their families, and others in great sorrow and inconveniences: it is therefore our earnest desire, that all Friends every where be very careful to avoid all inordinate pursuit after the things of this world, by such ways and means as depend too much upon the uncertain probabilities of hazardous enterprizes; but rather labour to content themselves with such a plain way and manner of living, as is most agreeable to the self-denying principle of truth which we profess, and which is most conducive to that tranquility of mind that is requisite to a religious conduct through this troublesome world. And on this head we further recommend, that Friends, as often as there may be occasion, do read, in their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, our ancient Friend George Fox's epistle of caution to shop-keepers, &c. last reprinted in the year 1710.

Finally, brethren, farewell. May the God of peace be with you, and his holy Spirit rule amongst you; then we doubt not but his blessing will be upon us, and we shall be preserved a people to the praise and glory of his great name.

Signed in and on the behalf of the said Meeting, by

JOSEPH WYETH,

Clerk of the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XLVIII—1725.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in the love of our heavenly Father, who hath been graciously pleased to favour this our annual assembly with his divine presence; and hath, in our meetings for worship, enabled divers of his ministers to bear faithful and living testimonies to his truth, in the demonstration of his word and power, to the comfort and edification of his church, and to the further gathering the sincere inquirer. And under the conduct of the holy

Spirit, wherewith God hath in good degree replenished his church, the affairs of this our meeting have been carried on in peace and concord.

By the accounts this year brought from the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in this kingdom, and by sundry epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys, Maryland, Virginia, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, North and South Carolina, and Barbadoes; as also by the verbal account of a Friend, who hath lately visited several of those American colonies, we have received comfortable accounts and relations of Friends' prosperity in the truth in many places, and that a disposition doth appear in the people to hear the testimony thereof.

Friends,

Let us watch diligently over our own spirits, to see that we are conformable to the spirit of truth; whereby our behaviour and conversation may be such as becomes godliness, and may adorn the doctrine of Christ Jesus, our Lord; who mercifully hath called us to be a people faithful in bearing the cross, and despising the shame, and cheerfully bearing our testimony to the great truths of the christian religion, which he hath revealed; and against every appearance of Antichrist and wickedness.

It is also advised and earnestly recommended, that inasmuch as it doth appear there is in some places a shortness and deficiency in bearing a faithful testimony against tithes, that, in any Monthly Meetings which have such members, after a deliberate dealing with them in the wisdom of truth and the meek spirit of the gospel for their help and information, Friends have recourse, for their further proceedings, to the Yearly Meeting minute, Anno 1706.

The accounts of the sufferings of Friends, which this year we have received from the counties of England and Wales, do amount unto four thousand seven hundred and twenty pounds, and upwards; and are chiefly for tithes and church-rates, so called. Two Friends prisoners have been discharged since last year; and there doth at present remain but one Friend prisoner on truth's account. Whereupon we have repeated occasion to observe to you the goodness and mercy of God in this, as in many other particulars.

And forasmuch as it hath been observed in this meeting, that some counties were deficient in their answers to the queries of this meeting, by being too general; therefore this meeting doth desire that a separate and distinct answer may be returned to each query for the future.

Former advice hath by this meeting been given, with regard to the honour of God and his truth, that the religious reputation of

our society might be preserved from blemish, and all just occasion of scandal; and we now again earnestly press and desire, that all Friends avoid as much as possible occasions of difference one with another. But if, notwithstanding such care, any difference shall happen and arise, that then the Friends of that meeting, in the compass whereof any such shall happen, take timely care to put an end thereunto, by advising and exhorting those between whom difference may happen, to refer the matter of their difference to impartial and proper arbitrators, which may be a very likely mean to avoid the scandal of going to law one with another, and to shew forth to the world that we love one another, which is a distinguishing mark of being Christ's disciples.

So shall we watch over one another in love, to strengthen the weak, to restore in the spirit of meekness those overtaken in a fault, and be very careful not to hurt one another in unity or reputation, by word or writing, as hath been advised by this meeting in the epistles of 1719 and 1720, and many other times, to which we do particularly refer you. In your religious meetings for the worship of God, both on the first and other days of the week, be diligent in waiting on him in his spirit, whereby you may renew your strength, and witness him your sufficient help; for surely many of us have cause thankfully to remember his early visitations in the assemblies of his people, where he broke in upon our hearts with his power and love, and did, in the needful time, administer help, comfort, and counsel, whereby we have, in the renewings thereof, been upheld in a faithful testimony, and in the discharge of our duty to him.

And you who are parents of children, labour fervently in the spirit, with secret supplication unto the Lord, that he may give them an inheritance in the truth, wherein they may be enabled to stand up in their generation after you to his praise and glory, rather than labour to get great inheritances for them in this world; which have proved a snare and temptation to some to shun the cross, and embrace the glory of this present world. But let those to whom God hath given riches take the apostle's advice, "That they be not high-minded, but fear; and trust not in uncertain riches; but therewith be rich in good works, willing to communicate, ready to distribute, and therein be good examples to their children."*

Dear Friends,

In the spring of divine love do we tenderly salute you, desiring the Lord of the heavenly harvest to settle and establish you in his holy covenant of light, in which you have believed; that you may

* 1 Tim. vi. 18.

walk therein to his glory, and your everlasting peace and comfort; and be thereby preserved faithful in that testimony which God hath given you to bear; sitting down in deep humility and fear, to wait for counsel and wisdom from him, that he may shew you your places, and bring you up in them in his pure love and life, in which you may serve him and one another, and be preserved from the many snares and temptations of the enemy, who still works to draw into a false liberty, and from the simplicity of the gospel, wherein our beauty hath been seen, and where the Lord hath manifested his power, and made us a people who were no people, and hath wrought wonders for our deliverance. O that we may dwell as in the dust before him! that he may say to us, "Arise and sing, you that dwell in the dust." So will the Lord rebuke the enemy, and exalt the horn of his salvation: that we may in truth say, "We have a strong city: salvation hath the Lord appointed for walls and bulwarks;"* herein we shall dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil.

And dear Friends; in the spirit of the gospel comfort and edify one another; pray for the increase of Sion, and the enlargement of all her borders; that God may delight to dwell among you, and instruct you in every good word and work, and crown your faithful labours with his blessing; and, at the end of your race, receive you into the mansions of his everlasting kingdom; whereunto we pray God preserve you. In his eternal love we bid you all farewell; and remain your Friends and brethren in the truth.

Signed in and on the behalf of the said Meeting, by

ALEXANDER ARSCOTT,

Clerk of the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XLIX—1726.

Beloved Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in the love of the Father, and his beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord, in thankfulness for the continuation of his merciful providence over us, as a people; and in humble prayer for our growth in all goodness and well pleasing to God, in obedience to him, and in brotherly love and charity one towards another.

We cannot omit to express our thankfulness to the king and government, for the additional favours which from time to time

* ISA, xxvi. 1.

we enjoy, and are blessed with, and which call for our utmost gratitude and fidelity.

By accounts brought from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Barbadoes, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys, New-England, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, and South-Carolina, we are given to understand that in divers places there continues an openness to hear the testimony of truth declared; by means whereof many have been reached, and some added to the church.

The sufferings of Friends this year amount to four thousand five hundred and nineteen pounds and upwards, mostly on account of tithes, and church-rates, so called. One Friend, a prisoner on account of tithes, hath been discharged since the last year, and two Friends have been since committed on the like account.

Dear Friends,

We think it meet to recommend to you the wholesome and prudent advice of the Yearly Meeting Anno 1719. viz.

“Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people. Thou shalt not raise a false report.” ‘Wherefore, in the fear of the Lord, stand against jealousies and evil surmisings, as well as against all whisperers, backbiters, tale-bearers, and defamers, and endeavour to put a speedy stop thereto; for their wicked practices and works of darkness tend to division and discord, and greatly weaken our love and unity, and many times injure the reputation of the innocent; and the righteous law of God goes against both the authors and encouragers thereof. And therefore, if you hear a report of a Friend, be careful not to report it again, but go to the person of whom the report is, and inquire if it be true or not; and if it be true, then deal with such person for it according to the doctrine of Christ, MATT. xviii; but if false, then endeavour, as much as in you lies, to stop such reports; for, as Solomon saith, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.”

Which wholesome advice was also repeated in the Epistle of this meeting in the year 1721.

To which advice, now not less seasonable, we recommend also the advise of our meeting in the year 1722, where it is said,

‘We earnestly desire that all Friends will thankfully embrace the present opportunity of cementing in a very close and brotherly fellowship one with another, in the divine spirit; and therein watch against all occasions of discord, or breach of unity, in any Quarterly, Monthly, or Particular Meeting; to the end Zion may continue a quiet habitation, the glory and presence of God rest and remain on her, and the spirit and doctrine of the gospel may be lived in and maintained; and then we need not doubt

‘ of seeing truth prevail in the earth in our days, and the glorious and spiritual kingdom of our blessed Redeemer established in the hearts of men.’

And, dear Friends ; as this meeting has at this time, as well as formerly, had several appeals laid before them, which have been the cause of protracting the time of this meeting, and given unnecessary trouble to it ; therefore we advise and recommend to all Friends in their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, as well as the particular members of them, to labour to make up all differences that may happen, without troubling this meeting therewith. And that they use all christian tenderness towards persons who may be concerned in controversy, either among themselves, or with the meeting ; in order to the convincing them of their error if they appear to be guilty, and giving them time sufficient to clear themselves if innocent. And on the other hand we recommend to Friends, not only that they abstain from all evil and hurtful conversation, as well in a private capacity, as what may affect the society, but also that they abstain from all appearances of evil as much as possible. And moreover that all seeds and small beginnings of controversies and scandals be very early taken care to be rooted out and destroyed, through Friends’ sincere endeavours with the parties concerned, while the remedy is easy ; by which means not only their own peace will be secured, but much trouble saved to the church in general.

To conclude, dear Friends, we earnestly recommend to you, whatever your places and stations in the church may be, that, in the most weighty and serious manner, you often call to remembrance, in all humility of mind, what it was that brought us to be a people, and what is, and will be, that which will preserve us such. That the foundation on which a true christian is built, is the spirit of Christ. Let this therefore direct you in all things, both respecting your private conversation, and whatever you do for God in his church. This is the only true mean to preserve you holy and blameless in the one, as well as serviceable and useful in the other. In this every one will have a single regard to the service that comes before him in Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, without partiality or respect of persons. “ Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but you shall hear the small as well as the great. You shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God’s.” DEUT. i. 16, 17. And in the management of such affairs they will find their own spirits rightly seasoned and prepared for every work and service to which they may be called, and all disorderly proceedings, arising

from the heat of our own spirits, will hereby be shut out ; and thus the church will be preserved on her ancient, solid, and permanent foundation, to the glory of God, and her own quiet and comfort.

The God of peace bruise Satan, the author of strife and confusion, under our feet ; that primitive love and concord may be preserved. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Signed in, and by order of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN WILSON,

Clerk of the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE L—1727.

Entirely beloved Friends and Brethren,

With that sincere and divine love, which labours for the prosperity of the churches of Christ Jesus our Lord, our heavenly head, we dearly salute you ; and send you the following particulars ; viz. That in this our annual assembly, we have been greatly favoured with the divine presence of our God, in our meetings for worship, and in those for the affairs of the church ; which have therein been carried on in much love and concord, to the edification of the body.

By accounts brought in this year, from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Virginia, Maryland, Barbadoes, and South Carolina, of the prosperity of truth, we have been comforted ; and that there is in divers places an openness to hear the testimony thereof, and some conviction. We likewise find there is in some places a decrease in number, by the decease of several of our ancient faithful Friends ; in whose places we heartily desire and pray that the rising generation may be brought ; whereby the standard of truth will be maintained among men, in those places where it hath pleased God to lift it up ; that others, not yet gathered, may be brought under it, where true happiness and safety is known.

The accounts of Friends' sufferings this year amount to four thousand and twelve pounds and upwards ; mostly for tithes and church-rates, so called. Three Friends, who were prisoners for tithes, have been discharged this last year, and one Friend hath been committed prisoner on the like account since that time. It doth appear to this meeting that Friends in divers places are un-

der difficulty, on account of stoppages, made in respect to demands for small tithes and church-rates, so called; and for illegal seizures, without warrant, on such accounts, which are in some places made; whereby we apprehend a voluntary compliance is implied, which doth tend to weaken and lay waste our testimony; and therefore this meeting doth tenderly renew the caution and advice hereupon given in a minute in the year 1703, whereunto we refer.

And, dear Friends; it hath long been the great concern of this meeting, that all Friends carefully walk in the divine light; that they may be preserved from the two extremes of covetousness on the one hand, and extravagancy on the other; the latter of which has been the occasion of the failings of some among us, in the non-payment of their just debts; by which great reproach hath too often been brought upon our holy profession. Wherefore we earnestly desire all Friends to be very careful, not to run into larger trading and business than their capacities and abilities can well answer; and that they frequently inspect their circumstances, and do not live at an expence beyond them. And, if through adverse accidents, any should fail in paying their just debts, and should, after his or her composition with his or her creditors, be so far blessed and prospered in their affairs, as to be capable of paying their deficiencies; it is the earnest desire and advice of this meeting, that they do not omit the same; it being agreeable to the command of the gospel, and common justice among men.

And according to the advice of this meeting in 1695, we do again earnestly exhort and advise, "That all diligence, care and caution be had, that no Friends, or Friends' children, be betrayed in affection or otherwise; nor join in marriage with those that are not of our christian profession and society; nor without the privity and consent of parents, guardians, or lawful tutors intrusted with them; nor with any near kindred, contrary to the law of God, and wholesome advice already given; particularly by the Yearly Meeting epistle of 1675, and also by several faithful servants of Christ."

And as it was, among other things, the weighty concern of this meeting last year, to recommend former wholesome and prudent advice, given in the years 1719 and 1721, against tale-bearing, false reports, jealousies, and evil-surmisings, so it is now the very weighty concern of this meeting, to exhort that all such things may carefully be stopped, discouraged and discountenanced; because they are immediately and directly a breach of charity and brotherly love; and in their consequences do naturally tend to break in pieces and dissolve all christian unity and society.

The elders that are among you we intreat to take the oversight of the flock of Christ, not by constraint, but willingly: not as lords over God's heritage, but as good examples; to help the weak, confirm the feeble minded, and labour to gather the scattered, and the other sheep not yet of Christ's fold, under him the one shepherd; where being fed in the pastures of life, they may, when he shall appear, receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Finally, dear Friends, we recommend you, in great earnestness of spirit, to the one unerring guide, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is able to preserve all of us from falling. And the not being obedient thereto, is the great and universal cause of evil and disorder, and giveth occasion for repeating advice upon particular cases from this meeting, which is matter of sorrow to all the sincere hearted; wherefore we again beseech all Friends to keep to the Lord's power, and the work thereof in themselves. This at first made us a people, who were not a people; and as herein we keep our meetings, they will be to God's glory, and our everlasting peace and salvation.

The God of love and peace rule among you, by the spirit of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom be glory, dominion, and praise for ever.

Signed in and on behalf, of the Yearly Meeting, by

THOMAS BEAVEN,

Clerk of the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LI—1728.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the pure love of that eternal truth whereby we have been gathered to be a people, we tenderly salute you; having renewed occasion, in great humility, to bless the name of our gracious God, whose continued goodness we have been favoured with at this our annual meeting; and, throughout, the affairs thereof have been conducted in meekness of wisdom, and true brotherly condescension, to our mutual comfort and edification.

By accounts from the Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales, as also by epistles from Scotland, Ireland, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Barbadoes, Long-Island, and Holland, we understand that Friends in general continue in a good degree of brotherly love and unity; and that there is an openness in divers

places, both in Great Britain and beyond the seas, to hear the testimony of truth, and some convinced; though in some places the accounts are not so favourable.

The accounts of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, in England and Wales, do amount to three thousand nine hundred and fourteen pounds, and upwards, mostly on account of tithes and church-rates, so called; and there is one Friend only continued prisoner on that account.

And, dear Friends; inasmuch as the holy scriptures are the external means of conveying and preserving to us an account of the things most surely to be believed concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and the fulfilling the prophecies relating thereto; we therefore recommend to all Friends, especially elders in the church, and masters of families, that they would, both by example and advice, impress on the minds of the younger a reverend esteem of those sacred writings, and advise them to a frequent reading and meditating therein. And that ministers, as well as elders and others, in all their preaching, writing, and conversing about the things of God, do keep to the form of sound words, or scripture terms; and that none pretend to be wise above what is there written, and, in such pretended wisdom, go about to explain the things of God in the words which man's wisdom teaches; but, on the contrary, that you would, at proper times and seasons, when you find your minds rightly disposed thereunto, give the youth to understand, that the same good experience of the work of sanctification, through the operations of the Spirit of God, which the holy scriptures plentifully bear testimony to, is to be witnessed by believers in all generations, as well as by those in the first ages of christianity; in which case, some account of your own experience will be helpful to them. And this we recommend as the most effectual means for begetting and establishing in their minds a firm belief of the christian doctrine in general, as well as the necessity of the aid and help of the operations of the holy Spirit of God in the hearts of men in particular, contained in that most excellent book the Bible; and for the preserving them from being defiled with the many pernicious notions and principles, contrary to such sound doctrine, which are at this time industriously dispersed in the nation, to the reproach of the christian profession in general.

And forasmuch as repeated occasion hath been given of great grief and affliction to Friends, which hath caused the way of truth to be evil spoken of, by the launching out of divers under our profession too far into the affairs of the world, to their own hurt, the reproach of the society, and wronging other persons of their just properties, we recommend great care and circumspec-

tion to all Friends in this respect, and in particular do refer to the advices in the Yearly epistles in 1710, 1724, and last year; and to desire Friends, at their several Monthly Meetings, to use their utmost endeavours, by a watchful eye, to prevent, as much as in them lies, all such unjust practices and scandals.

At this time, as at several other times in former years, it hath been the concern of this meeting to advise upon particular occasions, and in particular cases; which occasions could not offer themselves in this manner, if all Friends, who make profession of the holy truth with us, did duly regard the teachings of the grace of God in themselves, and obey the advice of that wonderful counsellor; because it is most certain, that all those who do or shall attend to the teachings and counsel of the holy Spirit of God, will find cause to say, with the Psalmist, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad;"* for by it all may be sufficiently instructed, and prepared to every good work.†

Finally, dear Friends, our beginning was in the spirit, and our comfortable fellowship is under the holy influences of it; therefore let all be diligent in waiting on God for the renewings thereof, and watching in it, whereby the snares of the evil one may be seen and avoided, and we continue a people, to the praise of his name, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, and therein shine, as his children, before the world. And we earnestly pray the Father of all our mercies may keep you blameless unto the day of the coming of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; in the fellowship of whose spirit we salute you, and remain your Friends and brethren.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

ALEXANDER ARSCOTT,

Clerk of the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LII—1729.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the love of our heavenly Father we salute you; signifying that, in this our annual assembly, the light of his glorious countenance hath graciously been afforded to us; and, under the blessing thereof, the affairs of his church have been carried on amongst us in much love, peace, and condescension.

By accounts brought from the several Quarterly and Monthly

* Ps. cxix. 96.

† 2 TIM. ii. 21.

Meetings in England; and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North-Carolina, Barbadoes, and Antigua; and also by the verbal accounts of our Friends Joshua Fielding and Samuel Bownas, who have lately separately visited the meetings of Friends in America; and also some places where no Friends do dwell, and where no meetings had before been; we have the comfortable and satisfactory account that truth doth prosper; and in many places there is an openness among the people, not only to hear, but also to receive the testimony thereof; and that Friends are generally in peace and unity one with another.

We are also particularly informed, that on the continent of America there is a very great increase of the number of Friends, among whom the affairs of truth are well managed; and that there is a spring of living and sound ministry raised in divers parts of those plantations; which we heartily wish and desire may be a mean to provoke and stir up Friends in general to a fervent zeal and concern for the honour and glory of the Lord our God, and the gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath been graciously pleased not only to gather us to be a people, but hath also hitherto preserved us; and by the arm of his mighty power, hath wrought wonderfully for our deliverance from many grievous burdens and oppressions which our elders laboured under.

The accounts of the sufferings of Friends brought in this year in England and Wales, do amount unto four thousand one hundred and thirty pounds, and upwards, mostly on account of tithes and church-rates, so called. There is at present no Friend prisoner on truth's account that we hear of in this kingdom. On which occasion we cannot but commemorate the goodness of our God in this his merciful dispensation, so different from the lot of our fathers; which we earnestly pray may, by all of us, be remembered with deep humility and thankfulness.

All Friends every where keep to the Lord's power, that gathered you to be a people that were not a people; that, under the work of it, you may be made what the Lord would have you to be; where every one of you may come clearly to see your places and services in the churches of Christ, and, from a real sense of your duty, be heartily engaged to stand by the testimony which God hath given you to bear; that, as good stewards of the manifold gifts he hath been pleased to bestow, you may be preserved faithful: and labour in that ability to stir up one another in love, and against the evil one, who is labouring to sow his evil seed of strife and contention, whereby he may divide in Jacob, and scatter in Israel; or, by coldness and negligence, lead any from the Lord,

and the light of his holy Spirit, wherein our communion hath been, and is still, sweet and pleasant; in which, as we are careful to walk, we can have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but are engaged to reprove them.

Dear Friends,

Many are the good and wholesome advices which in former years have been recommended from this meeting, exhorting to faithfulness and perseverance in all godliness and honesty; yet, to our grief, we find there are fresh instances of great shortness in coming up in the practice thereof; particularly by some injuriously defrauding their creditors of their just debts, and not performing their word and promise, which have occasioned grievous complaints: wherefore we desire and intreat, when any such occasion of reproach shall be, that at every Monthly Meeting, within the compass whereof it may happen, they do not fail speedily to set righteous judgment on the head of the transgressor.

And we would hope, if Friends, in their Monthly Meetings, should pursuant to the direction of this meeting in the epistle of 1708, appoint proper, sensible, and honest Friends to visit their respective members, it may in great measure prevent the necessity of repeating the advices which have been so frequently given. To which we find ourselves at this time engaged to add, and to request, that Friends in any part of this kingdom, or other place, where provisions and the necessaries of life are dear and scarce, or sickness doth remarkably afflict, would, in proportion to such scarcity, or affliction, exert their charitable assistance to the poor; which is our christian duty, as stewards of the many mercies wherewith the Lord hath intrusted us.

This meeting being at this time under a tender and religious concern for the youth among us, that the succeeding generation may be preserved in the way of truth, and through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ grow up therein, that, when we are removed, they may stand in a faithful testimony for the Lord, and be valiant in their day for his truth upon earth, do earnestly recommend it to all Friends, as much as in them lies to prevent their children and servants from reading plays, romances, and all such books as have any tendency to lead their minds from God, and draw their youthful affections to a love of the world, and desire after the vanities and evils that are therein.

And also to be very careful to prevent their children and servants from reading such vile and corrupt books (some of which have been published of late), as manifestly tend to oppose and reject the divine authority of the holy scriptures, and to introduce deism, atheism, and all manner of infidelity and corruption, both in principle and practice.

And likewise it ought to be the great care and concern of parents, as they value the welfare of their children and posterity, and others who have youth under their care, that they endeavour, by their example, as well as precept, to keep them from bad company; for many have found, by sad experience, the truth of that saying of the apostle, " Evil communication doth corrupt good manners."

We again recommend the advice given in the year 1723, that Friends be diligent in attending First and Week-day Meetings, for the worship of Almighty God: and that the elders and heads of families be good examples therein, and bring their children and servants to them.

Finally, dear Friends, approve yourselves as the children of the light and of the day, in all holy and christian conversation among men; whereby God will be glorified, the inquirer informed, the weak strengthened, and the whole church edified and comforted in the Spirit of the Lamb; by whom the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, is obtained.

And that thus the ends of the earth may be gathered, and all flesh see his salvation, is the hearty prayer of your Friends and brethren.

Signed in, and by order of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN WILSON,

Clerk of the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LIII—1730.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the fellowship of the Spirit of God our Father, who hath called us by his grace unto the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, we salute you; and hereby let you know, he hath been pleased graciously to favour this our annual assembly (which hath been large, and very comfortable) with his divine presence; uniting our hearts to him, and one unto another, in that love wherewith he hath loved us from the beginning; and wherein we earnestly desire all Friends may continue, in an humble and thankful remembrance of his mercies; daily waiting on him for strength to walk worthy of so high a calling.

By accounts brought from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, North-Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsyl-

vania, the Jerseys, and Long-Island; as also by verbal accounts of several Friends who have lately visited most of the meetings in the American plantations, we have received acceptable accounts of truth's prosperity, that love and unity in the general is maintained among Friends, and a considerable openness in many places to hear the doctrine of truth; and that several have received the testimony thereof in the love of it; which is matter of comfort, and encouragement to us to continue in faithfulness to it; notwithstanding in some places things are not so well as we could desire.

The accounts of the sufferings of Friends, brought in this year, in England and Wales, do amount unto four thousand and eighty-five pounds and upwards; mostly on account of tithes, and church-rates, so called. There is not at present, that we hear of, by the accounts brought in, any Friend a prisoner on truth's account in this kingdom.

We likewise give you to understand, that upon report of the Friends appointed to examine the accounts of this meeting, it doth appear that a collection is necessary to be made for the public service of Friends as usual; and therefore do earnestly recommend it, requesting all Friends, to promote and liberally forward such collection; and, when made, to remit the same to the hands of their several correspondents, for them to pay to the cashiers.

An earnest concern and travail of soul remains upon this meeting, that the discipline of the church may be preserved in its primitive purity, and the divers branches of our ancient and christian testimony maintained. We therefore exhort Friends, agreeable to former advices, to stand faithful in their testimony against tithes, priests' wages, and repairing of parish worship-houses. With this view our last Yearly Meeting was concerned, for the sake of all her members that might be weak, or their judgments not thoroughly informed therein, to re-print and publish ANTHONY PEARSON'S GREAT CASE OF TITHES; and we heartily desire and intreat Friends to read and disperse the same; hoping it may have this good effect, if read with a single eye, to manifest the inconsistency of tithes with this gospel dispensation.

And, dear Friends; we tenderly recommend the due observation and careful regard of the written epistle of this meeting 1728, relating to the ministry, and granting certificates either to men or women for that service; and do now further desire Friends to call on strangers for such certificates; thereby, in all places, to prevent being imposed upon, so far as may be.

And in regard we have been favoured by the government with the enjoyment of our religious liberties, in common with other

Protestant Dissenters, and in an especial manner relieved by the legislature, in several cases which peculiarly concern us as a people; we therefore think ourselves obliged earnestly to advise all Friends, that they be particularly careful to behave with all dutifulness and gratitude, and especially to discountenance every the least appearance of indecent freedom, or mark of dissatisfaction, in word or writing, relating to the government.

We also recommend the good order of Friends relating to marriage, that it be carefully preserved, and duly maintained, in the first and earliest proceedings leading thereunto, as well as the orderly solemnization thereof. And if any persons, contrary to the repeated advice and established order of Friends, should, under any pretence whatsoever, presume to take one another in any meeting for worship, without the consent of the Monthly Meeting to which they belong (such proceeding being of a clandestine nature, tending to make void the just care of Friends in that case, which is of good esteem among the people;) we advise that the Monthly Meeting doth not fail to testify against the practice, as well as against the persons concerned therein; whereby the body may be preserved clear from any just imputation of allowing or approving that practice. And also we intreat that due regard be had to the former advices of this meeting, respecting marriage between near relations, and intermarriage with persons not of the same faith and profession with us.

We likewise are engaged to refer to former advice from this meeting relating to a godly care and concern for the good education of our youth, in order to their preservation from evil conversation, and the corruptions which do too much abound; agreeable to that ancient and apostolic doctrine, that "Evil communication corrupts good manners." With this view we did last year, and do now again, earnestly recommend and beseech all Friends, to admonish and exhort the youth under their care, not to read but refrain, all such books as tend to make void the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and to promote profaneness and infidelity in the earth. This, if pressed earnestly in the love of truth, and in the meekness of wisdom, we would hope may often prove effectual. But if, after all these endeavours they shall not be reclaimed, then will a close reprehension and rebuke be necessary; that our society may be acquitted from the imputation of blame, which otherwise may be laid upon it. And we have good ground to hope, if parents of children, and masters of families, would carefully example their families in all christian watchfulness, it would be helpful to preserve our youth in our ancient and primitive innocency, and plainness in habit, in speech, and in all manner of conversation.

It hath been a weighty concern on this meeting, that our ancient and honourable testimony against Friends being concerned in bearing of arms, or fighting, may be maintained; it being a doctrine and testimony agreeable to the nature and design of the christian religion, and to the universal love and grace of God. This testimony we desire may be strictly and carefully maintained, by a godly care and concern in all to stand single and clear therein; so shall we strengthen and comfort one another.

Dear Friends,

Among the gospel precepts, we find not any thing more strongly and frequently recommended by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles to the primitive believers, than that they should love one another; and as we are sensible, that nothing will more contribute to the peace and prosperity of the church, than a due regard to this advice, so we earnestly desire that it may be the care and concern of all Friends, every where, to dwell therein; and, in the unity of the holy Spirit, to maintain love, concord and peace, in and among all the churches of Christ.

In order thereunto, we recommend it to all Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, to watch carefully over their members in this respect; that so, where any root of bitterness shall appear, that would bring forth envy, strife, emulation and hatred, and thereby our holy unity in the spirit be broken, they do use timely and earnest endeavours to prevent and remove the same; whereby we may be preserved a people to the glory of God, and in that perfect love and unity which will demonstrate us to be the disciples of Christ.

Beloved in the Lord,

Having given you the sundry advices proper and necessary, from the state of things as represented to this meeting, we do now add the recommendation of the apostle Paul to the church of the PHILIPPIANS; "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things:" commending you to God, and the word of his grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among the sanctified through faith in our Lord Jesus. Unto whom, with the Father, through the holy Spirit, be dominion and glory, throughout all the churches, now and for ever. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN MOORE,

Clerk of the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LIV—1731.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In a fresh spring of divine love, which has been mercifully and comfortably extended to us, in this our annual assembly; by which our hearts have been affected together, and our spirits lively engaged, for the help, strength and encouragement of one another, in that holy way of truth and righteousness into which the Lord our God hath called us a people; we dearly salute you: humbly beseeching the God and Father of all our mercies, that as he hath called us by his grace to be a people to his praise, and hitherto continued his most gracious and merciful visitations to us, so he may still continue to look down upon us with an eye of pity and tender compassion; and that he may never forsake his inheritance, but, according to our Lord's blessed promise, may "abide with us for ever."

We farther signify to you, that we have not only had large and comfortable seasons during the course of this our annual solemnity, in those meetings for the worship of God, but also in those which concern the general affairs of the church; which have been managed throughout in a spirit of love and mutual condescension, which we have reason to hope increases among Friends,

By accounts brought into this meeting from the several counties; as also by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, New-England, Virginia, Maryland, Long-Island, Pennsylvania, Barbadoes, North and South-Carolina, we have received acceptable informations of Friends' prosperity in the truth; and that love and unity, and a godly concern for keeping up the good order and discipline of the church, is maintained in many places; though in some others there is a shortness in these respects; which is matter of sorrow, and calls for our christian care and endeavour to redress,

We have also received accounts of some convincement in several places, both in Great Britain and America; and that there appears a great openness among people to hear the testimony of truth declared.

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales brought in this year, which are, as usual, mostly for tithes and church-rates, so called, is three thousand three hundred and five pounds, and upwards; and there is one Friend a prisoner on that account.

And now, dear Friends; in the weighty sense and considera-

tion of the present state of the church, we recommend unto you the following advices :

Inasmuch as we have a large body of youth growing up, the offspring of Friends, these call for our especial care and concern, that they may be preserved in the way of truth, in which our forefathers walked. And in order thereto, we tenderly recommend to all parents and guardians, first, that they take heed to themselves, that their own spirits be rightly seasoned and directed, for the help and good government of their children ; and then, that they have a constant and watchful eye in love over them for their good, and keep them, as much as possible, within their notice and observation. For this we are sensible of, that the miscarriages of youth have very much proceeded from their being imprudently indulged, or left to themselves ; by which means they become exposed to the danger of evil examples on the one hand, and vicious corrupt principles on the other, with which the world too much abounds. And therefore we earnestly and tenderly advise all parents and guardians to be watchfully concerned in this respect ; and that they take all proper occasions, both by example and instruction, to help their children. And that mothers of children, as well as fathers (as they have frequently the best opportunities) would take particular care to instruct them in the knowledge of religion and the holy scriptures ; because it hath been found, by experience, that good impressions, made early on the tender minds of children, have proved lasting means of preserving them in a religious life and conversation. This practice was enjoined strongly upon the people of Israel by Moses and Joshua, the servants of the Lord, who required them to read or repeat the law to their children. And the apostle Paul takes notice of Timothy's being well instructed in the holy scriptures from a child ; and of the unfeigned faith which dwelt in his grandmother Lois, and mother Eunice, 2 TIM. i. 5. who no doubt had a religious care of his education.

But where parents or guardians are deficient in such their care, we recommend to Monthly Meetings that they stir them up thereto, either by visiting them in their families, or in such manner as in the wisdom of God they may see meet ; that so the doctrines of the gospel, and a conversation agreeable thereunto, may be maintained unto all generations.

And in order to render these advices more effectual, we farther tenderly recommend to all heads of families, that they do frequently call their children and servants together ; and, in a solemn religious way, cause them to read the holy scriptures ; and in so doing, that they humbly wait upon God with their families, for instruction and counsel to them, respecting christian faith and

practice, according to the former advices of this meeting, particularly that in the year 1706; to which in an especial manner we refer on this occasion.

And with regard to that openness and good disposition which appears in the minds of people to hear the testimony of truth, and some conviction in divers places, we earnestly advise Friends, that they be careful of their conduct at all times, and on all occasions; that no stumbling-block be laid in the way of honest inquirers, nor offence given to tender young-convinced Friends. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Let us walk wisely towards those that are without, as well as those within. Let our moderation and prudence, as well as truth and justice, appear unto all men, and in all things; in trading and commerce, in speech and communication, in eating and drinking, in habit and furniture; and, through all, in a meek, lowly, quiet spirit; that, as we profess to be a spiritually-minded people, we may appear to be such, as, being bounded by the cross of Christ, shew forth the power of that divine principle we make profession of, by a conversation every way agreeable thereunto.

And, dear Friends; an earnest travail and concern of mind remains upon the spirits of many brethren, in order to excite all Friends, who make profession of truth with us, to stand faithful in our ancient and christian testimony against tithes of all kinds (as well as church-rates, so called), according to the several former advices of this meeting, particularly that in the year 1706.

And it will conduce very much to the rendering the foregoing and all other advices of this meeting effectual, if Friends every where, in an especial manner, take care to keep up the good order and discipline of Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, in that spirit of love and divine wisdom in which they were at first constituted; that therein every thing may be managed to the praise of God, and the preservation of his church and people, within the bounds and limits of his blessed truth. This, we are sensible, has been a mean, under divine direction, to keep many hurtful things out of the church; and therefore we are sincerely concerned that nothing may weaken the hands of Friends in this good work, but that it may be carried on for the support of our christian testimony in all its branches.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead
 "our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the
 "blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every
 "good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-

“pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory
“for ever and ever. Amen.”

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

WILLIAM WILLIAMSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LV—1732.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the fellowship of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our holy head and high priest, do we tenderly salute you; and hereby intimate, that this our annual assembly hath been favoured with the divine presence of Almighty God; in a sense of whose goodness the affairs of this meeting have been managed in much love, peace, and a spirit of condescension, to our mutual comfort and edification.

By advices brought from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Barbadoes, and North-Carolina; as also by the relation of a Friend, who has lately visited most of the British plantations on the continent of America, we have sundry good accounts of Friends' prosperity in the truth, and that several have been convinced last year; that love and unity are maintained, and care is continued in many places to keep up the discipline of our society, and maintain the testimony of truth unviolated; yet, to our sorrow, in some parts there appears too much shortness and remissness; which we heartily desire Friends, in their several quarters, may endeavour to redress.

The accounts of the sufferings of Friends in England and Wales, brought in this year, amount to three thousand four hundred and nineteen pounds, and upwards, chiefly for tithes and church-rates, so called. One Friend hath been discharged out of prison since last Yearly Meeting, and three remain prisoners on that account.

And, dear brethren; inasmuch as it hath been the frequent practice of this meeting to recommend to the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings tenderly to advise, and earnestly to exhort Friends to be careful in bearing a faithful testimony against the Antichristian yoke of tithes, priests' maintenance, and church-rates, so called; the want whereof, in some places, hath tended

to the uneasiness and sorrow of many brethren, and added to the sufferings of such as have stood faithful in this our ancient and christian testimony; and that the same may be amended for the time to come, this meeting doth again earnestly recommend to the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in the love of truth, tenderly to advise and exhort their respective members to stand faithful in that testimony; and where any Friends are found weak and deficient therein, that they deal with such in the spirit of love and wisdom, according to former advices of this meeting, particularly that in the year 1706.

It is also the earnest desire of this meeting, that all Friends be faithfully concerned to maintain the several other branches of our christian testimony; and that all Quarterly and Monthly Meetings be careful to advise their respective members to bring in the accounts of their sufferings, &c. that they may be duly recorded, and brought yearly to this meeting, agreeable to our epistle 1687.

We find it our duty to remind our respective members of the remarkable uprightness and honesty of our Friends in the beginning, in their commerce and converse. How exact were they in performing their words and promises, without evasive excuses, and insincere dealings! how careful not to involve themselves in business which they understood not, nor had stock of their own to manage! how circumspect not to contract greater debts than they were able to pay in due time! which brought great credit and reputation to our religious society. But with sorrow we observe, that, contrary to their example, and the repeated advices formerly given by this meeting, particularly in the years 1729, and 1731, against an inordinate pursuit after riches, too many have launched into trades and business above their stocks and capacities; by which unjustifiable proceedings, and high living, they have involved themselves and families in trouble and ruin, and brought considerable loss upon others, to the great reproach of our holy profession.

We therefore recommend to Friends, in their respective Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, to have a watchful eye over all their members; and where they observe any deficient in discharging their contracts and just debts in due time, so as to give reasonable suspicion of weakness or negligence, that Friends do earnestly advise them to a suitable care, and necessary inspection into their circumstances, in order that they may be helped; and if any proceed contrary to such advice, and by their failure bring open scandal and reproach on the society, that then Friends justifiably may and ought to testify against such offenders.

And, dear Friends, we tenderly and earnestly advise and exhort

all parents, and masters of families, that they exert themselves in the wisdom of God, and in the strength of his love, to instruct their children and families in the doctrines and precepts of the christian religion contained in the holy scriptures; and that they excite them to the diligent reading of those sacred writings, which plainly set forth the miraculous conception, birth, holy life, wonderful works, blessed example, meritorious death, and glorious resurrection, ascension, and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to educate their children in the belief of those important truths, as well as in the belief of the inward manifestation and operation of the Spirit of God on their own minds, that they may reap the benefit and advantage thereof, for their own peace and everlasting happiness, which is infinitely preferable to all other considerations. We therefore exhort, in the most earnest manner, that all be very careful in this respect; a neglect herein being, in our judgment, very blame-worthy. And farther; where any deficiency of this sort appears, we recommend to Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, that they stir up those whom it may concern to their duty therein.

It is very acceptable to us to find, by the accounts from the several parts of the kingdom, that (according to former exhortations of this meeting) Friends continue generally careful not to defraud the king of his customs, duties, or excise; and so far to discourage such practices, as to avoid dealing in goods reasonably suspected to be run. This is a care highly commendable, and no doubt incumbent on every honest subject. But as the government has signally favoured us in our religious liberties, we are under the greater obligations of gratitude, as well as duty, to manifest, that we are as truly conscientious "to render to Cæsar "the things that are Cæsar's," as to support any other branch of our christian testimony.

And as it is evident, that the simplicity, and distinguishing plainness of our holy profession is too much lost among us, respecting language, apparel, and behaviour; we therefore earnestly exhort all to keep under the power of the cross of Christ, which will crucify to the world, and the vanities of it, and bring up in a true life of self-denial, agreeable to the gospel, and example of our elders.

It is also desired, that all Friends, who are masters and heads of families, be very careful in attending, and bringing their children and servants to meetings, both on First-days, and othey days of the week; and that young Friends, who are sober and well-inclined, be encouraged to attend the service of Monthly and Quarterly Meetings; and that all Friends in such meetings wait to feel the power of truth, that their minds being seasoned with

the virtue thereof, the wholesome discipline of the church may be maintained and continued from one generation to another, for the help of such as are weak.

And for the dealing with all persons offending, according to the several circumstances of their offence, we recommend, that Friends in their said meetings be careful to labour in the spirit of love and meekness, regularly and impartially, for the help and reclaiming of all such. And if, after such labour of love, there appears no ground to hope for repentance, and the case be of a scandalous reproachful nature, that they proceed to testify against such practices, and those who are concerned therein.

Finally, dear Friends, to render these, and all other advices serviceable and effectual, we “commend you to God, and the word of his grace, which is (only) able to build you up,” and preserve you in the practice of all holiness of life, and godliness of conversation, and “to give you an inheritance among the sanctified, through faith in our Lord Jesus.” In whose love we tenderly salute you, and remain your Friends and brethren.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

EDMUND GURNEY,

Clerk of the meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LVI—1733.

Dear beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the love of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and law-giver, and in the fellowship of the gospel of peace and salvation, this our annual assembly doth tenderly salute you; earnestly desiring, that Friends every where, keeping under the holy influences and direction of the spirit of truth, may thereby be enabled to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, by a righteous and exemplary life and conversation among men, and a firm and steady adherence to the several branches of that christian testimony which we have been called to bear and maintain.

And, dear Friends; as the promotion of piety and charity is the end and intent of our meetings for the discipline of the church, a weighty concern remains upon us, that Friends be careful diligently to attend those meetings, and, when there, to act in the wisdom given them of God, with a real and living sense of truth upon their spirits; that so the affairs of the church may be carried on in brotherly love, and in that sweet, calm, and christian dis-

position of mind, which tends to the mutual comfort and edification one of another, and of the church in general.

We have cause to continue humbly thankful to the God and Father of all our mercies, who hath been graciously pleased to favour this our solemn assembly, with a living sense of his divine and heavenly presence and goodness: in the enjoyment whereof, we heartily and sincerely desire, that the meetings of Friends every where may be truly comforted and refreshed.

By advices from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, as also by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, Maryland, and Virginia, we have comfortable accounts of Friends' prosperity in the truth, and of the continuance and increase of peace and love among them: and although in some places there appears a want of zeal, yet the testimony of truth is attentively heard by many, and some have been convinced last year.

The accounts of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales, brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and church-rates, so called, amount to three thousand four hundred and fifty-eight pounds, and upwards. Two Friends have been discharged out of prison last year, and two are now remaining prisoners.

And, dear Friends; this meeting observing a remissness in some places, in respect to our testimony against that Antichristian yoke of tithes, an earnest concern and zeal has been on the minds of Friends, that all might be excited and stirred up to faithfulness therein: in order whereunto, we think necessary to put you in mind, that the zeal of our Friends who have abode faithful in their testimony against paying tithes, steeple-house rates, and priests' maintenance, has greatly tended to the opening of the eyes of many, not only in this, but also in other countries. We have received last year an account from New-England, where our Friends formerly underwent grievous sufferings, that a law is made, exempting them from paying either to the maintenance of the established ministers, or the repairing of their worship-houses; and it is our belief, that if all Friends here had been faithful in their testimony against tithes, the time of our deliverance from that oppression, under which this nation yet groans, would have been nearer at hand. We do therefore earnestly exhort to a close coming up in that, and every other branch of our testimony, tending to the promotion of gospel liberty, which it has been our concern ever since we were a people, through manifold sufferings, to maintain. And if any weakness or unfaithfulness shall appear among the professors of the truth, we hope faithful Friends and brethren will not be wanting to administer help and admonition in the love and counsel of God, as they shall see occasion,

for the restoring and strengthening of such, according to the advice given by the apostle, GAL. vi. 1. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness."

As it has been matter of comfort to us to hear that Friends in many places have a godly concern and care upon them, for the good education of their children in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and in plainness of habit and speech; so it is our earnest desire, that such a care may be continued and increased, and that all Friends would conscientiously discharge their duty therein, as in the sight of God. And, dear Friends, we must remind you to take all convenient opportunities to put your children upon reading and meditating in the holy scriptures; which having proceeded from the dictates of the holy Spirit, do afford the most comfortable and salutary instructions of all writings whatever, as we have heretofore often advised, and particularly in our epistles of the two last years, in which the advices on this head being large and comprehensive, we refer thereto.

And, as the first day of the week is set apart for the public worship of Almighty God, it is our earnest advice, that Friends would exhort and encourage their children and families to be diligent in attending meetings for worship, and to behave themselves there with seriousness and gravity, as becomes the professors of christianity; and to be regardful of the good counsel and admonitions of those whose mouths the Lord may be pleased to open in the work of the ministry, and that parents would be exemplary to their children in closely attending meetings, not only on the First-days, but, as much as in them lies, on other days of the week also; in which respect we cannot but with grief observe too many appear remiss.

The good accounts we have received of Friends' care in general to keep themselves clear of defrauding the king in any of his customs, duties, or excise, are very acceptable to us; and we do as formerly, so now again, recommend the continuance of a duty so necessary and incumbent on every good and faithful subject; being expressly commanded by Christ himself, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." MATTH. xxii. 21.

We also think proper to exhort Friends every where, to avoid all whisperings, backbitings and tale-bearings, tending to blemish the reputation of any, or to sow discord, and create evil-surmising one of another; a practice which ought to be zealously discouraged, as being of a most pernicious consequence to society. It is therefore recommended, that when any shall hear a report of such a nature, they take an opportunity to acquaint the person

concerned thereof, before they again report, or be instrumental to spread the same. And in order to stop the mouths of all tale-bearers and slanderers, Friends would do well to manifest their aversion to such a practice. "The north wind," saith Solomon, "driveth away rain, so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." *PROV. xxv. 23.*

And, dear Friends; our tender and brotherly advice to your several Quarterly Meetings is, that they would be careful annually to depute such Friends to attend the service of the Yearly Meeting, as are well acquainted with the affairs of the church, and diligent attenders of the meetings for discipline in the respective counties and places where they dwell, and whose practice and conversation is answerable to the testimony they profess to bear.

Finally, brethren, we recommend you to God, and to the teachings of his holy Spirit in your hearts, that divine monitor, which alone can supply the defect of outward instructions. And as you abide under its holy conduct and guidance, your strength will be renewed, you will be led into the practice of godliness and truth, and be enabled to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, to the praise of our heavenly Father, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To whose holy protection we commit you, and remain, in the fellowship of the one Spirit, your Friends and brethren.

Signed in and on behalf, of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN MOORE,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LVII—1734.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the fellowship of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our holy head and high priest, who, by the blessed influences of his divine and heavenly Spirit, first called us out of the evils and pollutions of the world, and hath by his mighty power preserved us unto this day, a people to his praise; we most tenderly and affectionately salute you.

In a grateful sense of the refreshing presence of our good and gracious God, which we have measurably experienced to overshadow this our annual assembly, we acquaint you, that the affairs of the church have been therein managed and carried on in a spirit of christian love and brotherly condescension, to the mutual comfort and edification one of another.

By the advices received from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, as also by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys, Rhode-Island, Maryland, and Long-Island, we have good and comfortable accounts of the prosperity of truth, and the convincement of several in this nation, and in divers parts of America; that some young Friends are of late raised up to bear a public testimony to the truth in our assemblies; and that a spirit of love and concord doth diffuse itself through the churches, to the uniting of Friends one unto another: so that we have just occasion of thankfulness to the Almighty, for the continuance of his ancient goodness, and the renewings of his merciful visitations towards us: and it is our earnest desire, that a constant care and regard may rest upon all our spirits, to walk worthy of the benefits received; and, by an holy and upright conversation, so to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, that others, by our good works which they shall behold, may also glorify God in the day of visitation.

The accounts of Friends' sufferings in Great Britain brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and church-rates, so called, amount to three thousand, one hundred, eighty-eight pounds, and upwards; and those in Ireland, to one thousand, five hundred and eighty-five pounds. One Friend has been discharged out of prison since last year, and one yet remains a prisoner on account of tithes.

And, dear Friends; for the sake of those particular persons, in some places, who yet continue remiss in maintaining their testimony against the Antichristian yoke of tithes, we think necessary to repeat the advice given last year, that Friends, as they shall see occasion in the wisdom of God, would admonish such, and, in the spirit of love and meekness, endeavour to help and strengthen them, and to excite and stir them up to faithfulness in that branch of our ancient testimony.

As there has been heretofore, so there yet remains upon this meeting, a peculiar regard to, and weighty concern for, the offspring of Friends, that the rising generation might be trained up in the principles and practice of the christian religion. In order whereunto as formerly, so now again, we recommend an humble waiting upon the Lord for the manifestation of his power and spirit, and a diligent reading of the holy scriptures in your families; and that masters of families, parents, and guardians of children, at proper and convenient opportunities, would stir up those under their care to diligence herein; shewing them, that those sacred writings do contain the doctrines and principles of our profession; and explaining to them, as the Lord by his Spirit shall enable,

the grounds and causes inducing Friends to distinguish themselves, by not conforming to the vain fashions and corrupt customs of the world; and that one great end of Christ's coming was, to form to himself a people, who, by their lives and conversations, should be patterns of that simplicity, holiness, and charity, which our great Lord himself in the most perfect manner exhibited, "leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." By simplicity, we understand an inward sincerity and lowly disposition of mind, producing that plainness of speech, habit, and manners, which Christ himself, and his holy apostles, recommended. By holiness, an internal purity and renovation of soul, wrought in us by the grace of God; the fruits whereof are, a devout and religious behaviour, justice, and inoffensiveness in all our dealings and conversation. By charity, that spirit of love, compassion, and forbearance, wherein consists the sum and substance of religion, and the introduction of that univesal peace and good will upon earth, which is the great design of christianity, as well as the badge and characteristic of our holy profession. "By this," saith our blessed Lord, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." JOHN xiii. 35.

And, dear Friends; we desire, that you would excite and stir up your children to a diligent attending the First-day and Week-day meetings, and be exemplary yourselves therein; not in a mere formal and customary attendance, but in a serious and diligent waiting upon the Lord; for as formality in worship occasioned the Lord to complain of his people in days of old, that "they drew near to him with their mouths, and with their lips did honour him; but had removed their hearts far from him," ISA. xxix. 13. so we have reason to fear, that the same formality has been one cause of that great declension from the purity and spirituality of gospel worship, which is too apparent among many of the professors of christianity.

And inasmuch as it hath pleased the Lord to concern some amongst us, as instruments in his hand, to travel to and fro, for the preaching and spreading of the gospel; we advise, that where meetings for worship are settled, when any such are concerned to visit you, you would give notice thereof to your sober and well-inclined neighbours, that they may have an opportunity to hear the testimony of truth declared; a mean which the Lord hath been often pleased to make use of, for the gathering many out of the world unto himself, through the power of the word of life faithfully preached.

And whereas the number of Friends attending the service of Quarterly and Monthly Meetings for the discipline of the church

is but small in some places, we desire that elders would give all due encouragement to such younger Friends as they observe to be religious and sober in their conversation, to attend the service of those meetings; that so, being inured to the management of the affairs of the church in the company of their elders, they may be the better qualified to succeed them therein, and to supply their places and service, when removed.

And seeing it very evident that "evil communications corrupt good manners," we think proper to recommend with much affection to our young Friends, that they be very careful to avoid all such company as, by a light and vain conversation, would tend to alienate their minds from the love of virtue and sobriety; for "the discourse of fools is irksome, and their sport is in the wantonness of sin." ECCLES. xxvii. 13. "If therefore thou be among the indiscreet, observe the time; tarry not there, but be continually among men of understanding." Ver. 12. And we do exhort Friends every where, that in the great concern of marriage; whereon much of the comfort and happiness of life depends, they be mindful to proceed in the fear of the Lord, and have an eye to him for counsel and instruction in their choice; the neglect of which has been the ruin of many families, and tended much to the reproach and dishonour of our holy profession.

We are glad to hear, by accounts received, that Friends are generally found in the practice of their christian duty of "rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;" and do earnestly recommend a strict care for the continuance of the same, in every branch of the king's revenue.

And we earnestly exhort all Friends and brethren, that, under a living concern of spirit for the honour of God, and welfare of his people, they diligently watch over one another for good; and where any weakness or unfaithfulness, touching any branch of our christian testimony, appears in any making profession with us, let such be timely and tenderly advised, and in the wisdom of truth stirred up to their duty.

Finally, dear Friends, we recommend you to God; to Jesus Christ the bishop of our souls; and to the holy Spirit, the anointing; that, being taught and anointed thereby, ye may shew forth the works of the Spirit; and having done your day's work in the day-time, ye may lay down **your heads** in peace, and receive at last the joyful welcome from our Lord and Saviour, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." MATT. xxv. 34.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

DANIEL VANDEWALL,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LVIII—1735.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ; in a renewed sense of whose ancient love and life, and in the fellowship of the one Spirit, the bond of peace, which at first united us one unto another, we tenderly salute you; knowing that this hath been our strength and preservation to this day, and only can enable us to persevere faithful unto the end in every good word and work. Wherefore we earnestly desire that the churches of Christ every where may thereby be established unblameable in holiness, and may increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men.

We are humbly thankful to the God and Father of all our mercies, that he hath been pleased to favour this our annual assembly with his wonted goodness and gracious visitations; and that the affairs and concerns of the church have been therein carried on in a spirit of mutual condescension and brotherly love; in which we impart unto you the following advices.

By accounts received from the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, as also by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Barbadoes, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, Virginia, New-England, Carolina, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys, we have received comfortable informations of the continuance of love and unity in the churches; and that although many of our ancient Friends are removed by death, it has pleased the Lord, by a fresh visitation, to raise up others in divers places to succeed them; several having been of late convinced, and some called to bear a public testimony to his name and truth.

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes and church-rates, so called, is three thousand five hundred and forty-five pounds, and upwards; and in Ireland, one thousand five hundred and thirty-four pounds, and upwards; making together above five thousand and eighty pounds. And one Friend is continued a prisoner on account of tithes.

And, dear Friends; as it hath been the concern of this meeting frequently to advise that Friends, should stand faithful in their testimony against that Antichristian yoke of tithes, so we do now renew our advice in that respect.

And we earnestly intreat the faithful among you to take all suitable opportunities of endeavouring to demonstrate, to such as are weak and unfaithful, the importance of our testimony against

receiving or paying of tithes, the natural tendency whereof is to obtain that liberty which the purest ages of christianity enjoyed; that is, a liberty for any person, moved by the holy Spirit of God, to preach the doctrine of the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ freely; and of which they were not deprived, till such time as great corruptions of doctrine and practice were found amongst the professors of christianity, and the civil powers were prevailed upon to meddle with the consciences of the people, which of right are to be subjected to God only.

We cannot therefore but bless the Lord, from an experimental witnessing of the comfort and spiritual advantage which arises from such a liberty, that he was pleased to raise up our worthy elders, and to give them a testimony against that Antichristian yoke; making them willing, in this and other nations, to suffer for that testimony, thereby shewing to the world what the love of Christ is able to do; for, we believe, nothing short of that love could have enabled them to suffer the spoil of their goods, and the long imprisonments of their bodies even unto death, as some of them did, for their conscientious refusal to pay tithes; and we have reason to believe, that if all amongst us had followed their example, by abiding faithful in this our christian testimony, we might, before this time, have been in a great measure relieved from under that oppression.

And as it hath been frequently the care and concern of this meeting to advise parents, and all who have the tuition and education of children, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; we are still sensible that there is occasion to repeat our tender advice and exhortation that you would lay this matter closely to heart; for it is certain that the preservation of your offspring in the way of true religion and godliness, is of much greater moment to their happiness, both in this life, and in that which is to come, than any thing else you are capable of doing for them; and therefore we renew our advice, that you be diligently exercised in such a godly care, waiting upon God for wisdom from him, first to walk wisely and circumspectly before them yourselves, and then you may, with more weight and authority, in the meekness of that wisdom, instruct, advise, exhort, and rebuke, as you shall see occasion. And we think it will contribute very much to your success in these endeavours, if you put them frequently in a solemn manner upon reading the Holy Scriptures, especially such parts of them as relate to the great doctrines and precepts of the christian religion; and then wait upon God with them, that you may become instruments to open their understandings; and, in the sense of his power and wisdom, press them closely to the practice of what they read. Such an

exercise as this, begun early, and frequently repeated, we recommend as the indispensable duty of all concerned, and the most likely mean for the preservation and improvement of children in the way of truth; and, through the Lord's blessing, to secure them from being prevailed upon by the many false deceitful spirits that are gone forth into the world, tending to subvert the christian faith, and a practice and conversation agreeable thereto.

And forasmuch as a true christian practice, and every branch of it, is the fruit and effect of the inward sanctification of the heart by the spirit of Christ, for which we are frequently to wait on him in all humility and lowliness of mind, we tenderly advise, that every thing tending to obstruct or divert the minds either of children, or those of more advanced years, from this good exercise, may be carefully avoided, and taken out of the way. And it being evident that the glory and vanity of the world, and the pleasures and diversions of it, are of this nature and tendency, we therefore advise, that all parents and masters, in the first place, be good examples to their children and families, in an humble and circumspect walking, and with all plainness of habit and speech, which is agreeable to the cross of Christ, the example of our ancient Friends, and the frequent advices of this meeting. And also that they be very careful not to indulge their children in the use and practice of things contrary thereunto; for we are sensible that, by such habits, of how little moment soever some may think them, the tender minds of children, while very young, being lifted up and drawn aside from the simplicity of the truth, a foundation is early laid for those undue liberties so justly complained of. For a love and delight in such things, imprudently indulged at first, grows up with them, and becomes strengthened more and more into confirmed habits; and thus some have become enemies to the cross of Christ, and forsaken and opposed the way of truth; which possibly might have been prevented by parents doing their duty, in being good examples, and not cherishing the seeds of vanity and folly in their children, but, on the contrary, prudently discouraging every appearance of evil in them; which necessary duty we earnestly recommend to their serious consideration and practice.

And we do further recommend, as a mean very conducive to the preservation of Friends a people of one heart and one way, for the good of themselves, and their children after them, that the discipline of the church, in the several meetings instituted for that purpose, be kept up and managed in a spirit of wisdom and love. Let all things in those meetings be done with charity; let the love of God in an especial manner rule in their hearts; and therein, though sometimes different sentiments may arise, yet will

every particular member have the same thing in view; viz. the glory of God, and the good of his church and people; and in this singleness of heart they will best promote the great end and services of those meetings. We advise therefore, upon this occasion, that nothing be done through strife and contention, nor from any private views, or the influence of numbers; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem another better than himself. And where any debates arise, endeavour, in a spirit of meekness, to convince one another; and as you so stand mutually engaged in love, your hearts will be enlarged, and all undue warmth and discord will be gradually removed, and you will be enabled, through meekness, humility, long-suffering, and forbearance one of another, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; always bearing in mind that excellent caution of the apostle, GAL. v. 26. "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another: knowing this, that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit." Verse 22, 23, 24, 25.

The advices we have received of the general care of Friends to keep clear from defrauding the king in any branch of his revenue are very acceptable to us; who hold it our indispensable duty, with regard to kings, and all that are in authority, to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

Again, dear Friends; we esteem it our duty to renew our former advices, that Friends every where take diligent care to prevent, as much as possible, persons professing with us defrauding their creditors of their just dues, to the great scandal and reproach of our holy profession, by timely admonishing and cautioning all those of our society, who, by delays in payment, and breaking their words and promises, give reasonable cause of suspicion that their circumstances are desperate; advising all such to inspect their accounts, and give up their effects in time, in order to make the best they can to their creditors, which will most conduce to their own peace, and the credit and reputation of our christian society. But if any, through ambition or desire of grandeur in the world, shall reduce themselves to insolvency after having been thus plainly cautioned, and dealt with according to the nature of the offence, and pursuant to the advices of this meeting in the years 1728 and 1732 (to which we refer you,) then the society will justly be clear of reproach arising from the misconduct of such. A care of this nature we earnestly recommend, not only to Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, but also that Friends, in

their private capacity, watch over, advise, and caution one another, whenever they observe any real occasion for it.

And as it has pleased the Lord, in his great mercy and goodness, to favour the faithful among his people, not only in such public assemblies as these, but also in their small retired meetings in the country every where, with the lifting up of the light of his countenance upon them, and renewing an inward and spiritual acquaintance with them, by which they are greatly encouraged to meet often together to think upon his name, and, as he shall move any thereunto, to speak one to another, to their mutual edification and comfort; we take this opportunity to renew our former advices, that Friends, in their several counties and places, be diligent in attending religious meetings for the worship of God, not only on First-days, but on other days of the week, and, as near as may be, at the time appointed; there being, by accounts brought into this meeting from some places, a great neglect in this respect; which we have reason to believe is owing to a being over-charged with the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the love of other things, which choaks the good seed, so that love to religion and the worship of God decays and grows cold.

Finally, Brethren, we exhort you, in the words of the apostle, to “warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.” 1 THESS. v. 14, 15.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

EDMUND GURNEY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LIX—1736.

Dearlly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the sweet communion and fellowship of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which brought us to be a people, we tenderly salute you, and impart unto you the following advices:

The affairs of this our annual assembly (blessed be the God and Father of all our mercies) have been carried on in a spirit of meekness and condescension, and with much love and quietness; and the ancient power and goodness of the Lord (the crown of all our religious assemblies) has been measurably experienced

among us, to the refreshing and comforting the hearts of his children.

By accounts from the Quarterly Meetings in England, as also by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Barbadoes, South and North-Carolina, Maryland, New-England, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, we are informed of the continuance of peace and concord in the churches in general; and that, notwithstanding the declension of some particular persons, who, through neglecting the guidance of the holy Spirit in themselves, have been drawn aside into undue liberties, to the grief and exercise of the faithful; yet it hath pleased the Lord in many places to afford a fresh visitation of his power and spirit, to the convincing and gathering of others, and to the carrying on that work of reformation which he hath begun in the earth, and will fully accomplish in his own appointed time.

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales, brought in this year (chiefly for tithes and church-rates, so called,) is three thousand three hundred thirty-two pounds, and upwards; and of those in Ireland, one thousand four hundred fifty-eight pounds, and upwards; besides which, some particular Friends have been put to great expences, by prosecutions in the ecclesiastical and other courts; and if all Friends did bring in an account of their sufferings, the sum would be much greater than it is. One Friend is discharged from his imprisonment since last year; and there are two at present prisoners on account of tithes.

And, dear Friends; as we have, ever since we were a people, maintained our christian testimony against tithes, and forced maintenance of ministers, as contrary to the nature of the gospel dispensation; we cannot but repeat our earnest exhortations, that Friends every where stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and beware of burdening their own consciences, by a mean submission to an Antichristian yoke of bondage, through fear of sufferings. A meek and quiet spirit under temporal inconveniencies, for the sake of our christian testimony, is one of the best proofs of our sincerity therein, and may be a mean of effectually recommending us to the compassion of those whom God has placed in authority over us, to whose hands he has committed the power of giving us relief, and from whom it becometh us to seek it with humility and patience.

Though the accounts we have received from some places of this and other countries, of the prosperity of truth, and of the coming forth of some among us in a public testimony thereunto, have been very acceptable to us; yet it is with much grief and con-

cern that we observe in some a declension from the way of righteousness and truth, as well as from the plainness of habit, and simplicity of speech and behaviour, which were so conspicuous in our early Friends, and many of their offspring. This declension we apprehend arises from a disregard to the divine light and truth they have been often recommended to, as the regulator of their words and actions. By a careful and conscientious regard to this, the holy men, in all ages, obtained a good report; and our ancients, and many of their immediate offspring, were comely in the eyes of the nation, for their solid deportment, and religious regard to their words and actions. A godly fear rested upon their minds, that the precious truth and principle which they professed, and felt the blessed effects of, might not suffer reproach from their misconduct. The like holy concern now, would tend to regulate our youth, and render them more comely in the eyes of beholders, than any external ornaments or deckings of the body whatsoever. This would instruct them to avoid all pride and affectation, and endue them with humility, modesty, and virtue; which recommend to the favour of God, and a good esteem among men. A religious regard to the principle of light and truth, God's witness in the mind and heart of man, ever produces the most beneficial effects, as well to society in general, as to every one in particular. This would introduce universal love, peace and concord among mankind; this would sweeten the bitter spirit, mollify and assuage the fierce and violent dispositions of men, mutually endear relations and friends, and bring all into the unity and fellowship of the holy spirit; the fruits whereof (the apostle declareth) are "joy, peace, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, and charity." We do therefore most earnestly recommend a strict attention to this holy and divine principle to Friends every where, and in a particular manner to the youth of the present generation.

And, dear Friends; you who have children under your care or tuition, we beseech you to accustom them early to the reading of the holy scriptures, and to train them up in the way of the cross, as soon as they are capable of receiving impressions of good and evil; that parents be careful how they indulge them in any thing that has an evil tendency, endeavouring to restrain them from every hurtful thing which their natural inclinations may lead them to desire after; this, we think, is the indispensable duty of all parents; and we cannot see how they can answer the omission of it in the sight of God. For such neglect too often occasions ill habits, which afterwards are not to be restrained without great difficulty, if at all. We also earnestly intreat our young Friends with all readiness of mind, to receive and give place to

the labour of love and wholesome admonitions bestowed upon them by their parents or others, for their benefit and instruction; and carefully to avoid all evil company, which corrupts good manners, and leads into disorder and extravagancy. And that the endeavours of parents may be crowned with success, it becometh them to enforce their advice by a suitable practice, and an exemplary walking in all holiness and godliness of conversation.

And, dearly beloved Friends and brethren; we desire you to encourage such youth as are regular and sober in their conversation, to frequent our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings; that they may see the care which is taken for the maintenance of our poor, and the preservation of our christian discipline, and thereby become more useful in their respective meetings, and to the church in general. And we tenderly intreat, that you would, both by word and example, excite them to a diligent attendance of our meetings for worship, not only on the First-days, but also on the other days of the week.

By accounts from the several counties, we do not understand but that Friends are clear from the practice of running of goods, or defrauding the king of his customs or revenues. We earnestly recommend the continuance of that necessary duty, and desire that Friends every where may be careful to discourage such practices; which are not only unjust, but also inconsistent with that gratitude which we, as a people, ought to express towards a government, to whose lenity and goodness we are obliged for the privileges we enjoy.

And it is the earnest desire of this meeting, that a spirit of love and humility may more and more diffuse itself among us, and influence the hearts of all: that so every one may come to seek peace and pursue it; and that none be apt to take offence, but each in his own particular be more careful to rectify his own failings and imperfections, than curious in observing, censuring, and aggravating those of others. This will lead to the exercise of mutual forbearance and forgiveness one of another; by which the occasions of contention will be avoided, and the churches preserved in a state of peace and tranquility.

And, dear Friends; in order that, as we have received Christ, so we may walk in him, in all holiness and godliness of conversation, we earnestly exhort that ye hold fast the profession of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, without wavering; both in respect to his outward coming in the flesh, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, mediation and intercession at the right hand of the Father; and to the inward manifestation of his grace and holy Spirit in our hearts, powerfully working in the soul of man, to the subduing every evil affection and lust, and to the purifying

of our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God ; and that, through the virtue and efficacy of this most holy faith, ye may become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might ; which will enable you to worship God in spirit with acceptance, and preserve you, in a lively frame of mind, from a drowsy and lukewarm spirit ; which, in all our religious assemblies, ought to be guarded against with the utmost care and circumspection. In this lively faith, and pure life of Christ, you will have victory over the world, over your desires after the grandeur and perishing things thereof, and over all corrupt customs and fashions, which are contrary to the gospel, and our ancient christian testimony.

Finally, brethren, farewell. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

ALEXANDER ARSCOTT,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LX—1737.

Dearly Beloved Friends and Brethren,

In a renewed sense of the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which at first gathered us to be a people, and in which all the living members of the true church, however scattered and dispersed throughout the world, are united, and become one flock and family under him, the one great and universal shepherd of the sheep, we tenderly salute you.

We have repeated cause, with humble and thankful hearts, to praise the name of the Lord our God, for the continuance of his merciful visitations towards us ; and that he hath been graciously pleased to favour us, in this our Yearly Meeting, with a comfortable sense of his divine presence, and enable us, under the influence of his grace, to transact the business and affairs of the church in the spirit of peace and charity ; which is the bond of perfectness, and the strength of christian society.

The accounts brought in this year from the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and the epistles received from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, and Virginia ; as also the verbal account of a Friend lately returned from his travels in America ; have brought us very

comfortable advices of the prosperity of truth; the power and virtue whereof is manifested in divers places, to the convincing of many. For the sake of such tender and young-convinced Friends, an earnest concern is on the minds of many, that no occasion of stumbling or offence be laid in their way; but that all such as have made longer profession of the way of truth, may be careful to walk before them in all holiness and uprightness of conversation, and in an humble waiting upon the Lord; that their example may tend to the encouragement and strengthening of those who have been more lately visited, to a steady and constant perseverance in the path which the Lord hath directed their feet into.

The sufferings of Friends in England and Wales brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes and church-rates, so called, amount to three thousand five hundred and sixty-five pounds, and upwards; and those in Ireland, to one thousand four hundred and eighty-five pounds, and upwards; making together above five thousand and fifty pounds. And there are three prisoners on account of tithes.

You have been often reminded of the importance of our ancient testimony against the Antichristian yoke of tithes; and as you are convinced in your consciences of their inconsistency with the nature of the gospel dispensation, it is certainly your necessary duty to act agreeably to such convictions. And if sufferings for your testimony shall be the consequence of your obedience therein, it will become you, after the example of the primitive christians, cheerfully to submit, and to take joyfully the spoiling of your goods, that so you may preserve a conscience void of offence towards God; and at the same time, by your christian meekness, and innocent deportment, give reasonable evidence of your sincerity to men.

And, dear Friends; having received very comfortable accounts from divers places, of the good disposition raised in the minds of young persons to walk in that plainness and self-denial which have been often recommended by this meeting, we earnestly desire that parents and guardians, and Friends every where, would watch over such, and encourage and cherish every thing which may contribute to their growth and progress in the ways of truth and holiness; and for the strength and encouragement of every such well-disposed young person, we earnestly exhort masters and mistresses of families to be exemplary, and to enforce their advice by an agreeable practice; and in no wise to discourage, but encourage, both in their children and servants, that plainness of speech and behaviour which the truth leads to.

And, dear Friends; we should be glad to hear that all those

who make profession with us, and are blessed with outward substance, were more diligent in attending not only our meetings for worship, but also such meetings as are appointed chiefly for the care and relief of the poor among us; which we hold as a duty incumbent on every member of the church, but in an especial manner on those who are of ability; that when it shall please the Lord, who has given them talents, and abundance of the good things of this world, to call them to give an account of their stewardship, they may render the same with joy, and not with sorrow.

And, dear Friends; That the affairs of our society may continue to be managed in the meek and peaceable wisdom of truth, let the elders of each Monthly Meeting have an eye upon the younger, and consider their conversations, qualifications, and growth in the truth; and invite such as are sober and hopeful to the meetings for business and the affairs of the church, that they may learn and improve in the knowledge of the discipline of the church, and become instrumental to the service of God, his truth, and people.

And, dear Friends; it is with much sorrow and grief of heart we have still occasion to remind you of the advices so lately delivered in our yearly epistles; namely, to keep out of the extravagant fashions and customs of the world; and not to launch further into trade and business than you are capable of managing, and carrying on with reputation and credit among men, and without prejudice, loss, or detriment to any. We are fully persuaded, that if Friends every where had a due respect and regard to this one precept of Christ; viz. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;"* which is the indispensable duty of all his followers to observe; we should have little or no occasion for the repetition of such advices. Let therefore, we earnestly beseech you, the precept of our blessed Lord and master, and holy head, be duly considered and put in practice; that, by ordering our conversations agreeable to our profession, we may shew forth the praise of him that has called us. So shall we witness the promise to be fulfilled, "Them that honour me," saith the Lord, "I will honour."†

Finally, brethren; we recommend you to the direction and guidance of the unerring spirit of truth within, and the excellent precepts and instructions of the holy scriptures without; which if you shall diligently take heed unto, you will not fail of being perfectly instructed in the great duties of worship towards God, the Father and author of all our mercies; of fidelity and gratitude to the government, which his merciful providence has set

* MATT. vi. 33.

† 1 SAM. ii. 30.

over us; of love and peace among yourselves; and of justice and benevolence towards all men.

We again salute you in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our heavenly Father; to whose holy care and protection we commit you, and bid you farewell.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

HENRY BRADFORD,

Clerk to the meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXI—1738.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In a sense of the continued mercy and loving kindness of the Lord our God, and in the fellowship of the gospel, we tenderly salute you; earnestly desiring that Friends every where, by closely adhering to the guidance of the holy Spirit in themselves, may be preserved in the way of truth, and enabled so to adorn their profession by an exemplary conversation, as that the church may yet shine more and more in the beauty of holiness.

The affairs of this our annual assembly have been managed in peace and concord, to our mutual comfort and edification.

By advices from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by epistles received from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Maryland, Virginia, and Barbadoes, we have comfortable accounts of the continuance of christian love and unity in the churches, and of a readiness in many people to hear and assent to the testimonies of truth declared; and that several are lately convinced, and make public confession of the blessed truth with us. And as we have reason to believe that the Lord has inclined the minds of many to receive the doctrine of the gospel, there is a weighty concern incumbent upon us to walk before them in all godliness and honesty; that we give no offence, nor interrupt the progress of so blessed a work in any, through our neglect or disobedience.

The sufferings of Friends in England and Wales brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes and church-rates, so called, amount to three thousand three hundred and sixty pounds, and upwards; and those in Ireland, to one thousand five hundred and ninety pounds, and upwards; making together above four thousand nine hundred and sixty pounds. Besides which, several Friends are now under severe prosecution for tithes; though three prisoners on that account have been discharged since last year.

And, dear Friends; as the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was at first freely promulgated by himself and his immediate followers, the nature of it being unalterable, it behoveth that the ministers thereof, in all succeeding times, be like-minded; not acting "by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." 1 PET. v. 2. When we call to mind the grievous sufferings which our ancients underwent, in this and other nations, for their testimony against a man-made ministry, and hireling preachers; and their great concern to revive and publish the doctrine of the gospel, as it was declared by Christ himself, when on earth, "Freely ye have received, freely give," MATT. x. 8. and revealed to one of his servants, who was banished to the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," REV. xxii. 17. we say, dear Friends, when we call to mind the travails, the jeopardies, and the sufferings they underwent, for publishing this evangelical doctrine to the world, our hearts are grieved when we find any of their offspring, or any under our name, declining their testimony against the Antichristian yoke of tithes; for which, as well as other branches of our christian testimony, so many of our brethren and sisters have suffered not only the loss of their substance and estates, but long and tedious imprisonments, even unto death. We therefore tenderly exhort all who profess the truth to watchfulness and zeal, that this branch of our christian testimony be not laid waste, by connivance or private agreement with priests or impropiators; but that all abide patient under that testimony which the Lord has called us to bear; not doubting but that the gradual progress of real christianity will at length operate, to the removal of a yoke so directly contrary to the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. "Stand fast," says the apostle, "in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." GAL. v. 1.

And forasmuch as we are called with an high and holy calling to all holiness and purity of conversation, let your behaviour among men be unblameable, and such as may adorn the gospel of Christ. Let not the vain and foolish fashions and customs of the world, which pass away, and which our ancient Friends were concerned to bear testimony against, prevail over you; but "be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind," ROM. xii. 2. Avoid sports, plays, and all such diversions; as tending to alienate the mind from God, and to deprive the soul of the comfortable enjoyment of his presence and power. Be temperate and sober; shun all excess in eating and drinking; that, according to the advice of the apostle, "your moderation may be known

“unto all men.” PHIL. iv. 5. Let such of you as deal in spirituous liquors be careful to limit your trade within the bounds prescribed by the law of the land. “Beware, lest any of you suffer as an evil-doer.” 1 PET. iv. 15.

And, dear Friends; when we consider that it was the power of the Lord which first gathered us to be a people, and enabled our ancients to bear a faithful testimony to his name, we cannot but exhort you time after time to wait for a renewed enjoyment of the power of truth upon your hearts, that thereby you may be encouraged to come up in your respective services; and in a conscientious suffering for the christian testimonies you are concerned to bear. Our blessed Lord, just before his ascension, commanded his disciples and followers “to wait at Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high;” knowing their inability, without the sensible feeling of that power, to speak in his name for the conversion of the nations. It was this power that enabled them to speak boldly in the name of Jesus. This alone made them able ministers of Christ; whose “preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom; but in the demonstration of the spirit, and of power.” And seeing many of us have experienced much spiritual consolation by waiting in silence, and humbly depending upon the Lord alone, we exhort Friends to be very careful to observe the hours appointed for religious worship; and that, when together, they labour to feel their minds abstracted from visible objects into a true stillness and nothingness of self, wherein the teachings of the holy Spirit are witnessed by humble and contrite souls. In such a waiting state, you will have a true relish and savour of the ministry of those who are rightly concerned by the same spirit to labour in word and doctrine among you.

And, dear Friends; be careful to avoid all back-bitings, whisperings, and tale-bearings; “for the words of a tale-bearer,” says the wise man, “are as wounds,” PROV. xviii. 8. tending to the defamation, and lessening the characters one of another. Be not therefore like those of whom the prophet complains, “Report, say they, and we will report;” but when you hear a thing tending to the defamation of any, enquire of the reporter whether he has acquainted the person affected thereby with such report? If not, caution him to forbear spreading the same, lest the reputation of the innocent be injured thereby. Endeavour to put a speedy stop to all such wicked practices, and works of darkness, justly condemnable not only in the authors, but the encouragers thereof. “He that worketh deceit,” says the royal psalmist,

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“ shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not
 “ tarry in my sight.” PSAL. ci. 5. 7.

And, dear Friends; as much as in you lies, take care that the business of your Monthly Meetings be transacted by persons who are well grounded in the principles of truth; and beware of committing the management thereof to such as know not their own spirits seasoned by the work of truth in themselves. But where you observe any young persons of a grave and solid deportment, and inclinable to be helpful in the church, discourage them not; but endeavour to bring them forward in the service of truth, according to their respective abilities for so weighty a work.

We find it our duty also to remind you, that a godly concern may always rest upon your minds for the good education of your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Excite them to a frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, and a reverent regard to the blessed truths therein contained. And, as it is apparent, to our very great grief, that the simplicity and distinguishing plainness of our profession, respecting language, apparel, and behaviour, is too much departed from by many among us, we earnestly desire, that parents and heads of families would be exemplary to their children and servants therein, by abiding under the power of the cross of Christ; which will crucify us to the world, and the vanities of it.

We are also concerned to remind you of the advice heretofore given, in our epistle of 1719, in the following words; viz.

“ We being given to understand, that in divers places there are
 “ some who profess the truth with us, who deviate from the way
 “ thereof, by contracting of marriages with such as are not of our
 “ society, contrary to the repeated advice of this meeting, to the
 “ dishonour of our holy profession, and the hindrance of truth’s
 “ prosperity; in order, therefore, that a stop may be put to an
 “ undue liberty in such marriages, and the evil consequences
 “ thereof, we do hereby tenderly advise and desire, that all pa-
 “ rents and guardians of children do take special care, as much
 “ as in them lieth, to prevent their children from running into
 “ such marriages; and that Friends of each Particular Meeting,
 “ as also of the Monthly Meetings to which such persons belong,
 “ do, in the wisdom and power of truth, use their endeavours to
 “ put a stop to the said evil, by admonishing such as may attempt
 “ to marry as aforesaid, to desist before they accomplish the same.
 “ But if they refuse to take counsel, or privately go on to marry
 “ as aforesaid, that then such persons be dealt withal according
 “ to the good order of truth, and judgment fixed upon all such
 “ as take such an undue liberty.”

And, dear Friends; inasmuch as our time in this world is short and uncertain, it is tenderly advised, that such Friends as it has pleased the Lord to bless with outward substance, would settle their affairs by will or otherwise, in time of health and understanding; that so all occasions of discord and disputes, which the neglect of such a prudent care has sometimes raised among families and relations, may be prevented.

Finally, dearly beloved Friends and brethren; we commend you to the grace of God, and the guidance of his unerring spirit; reminding you of the brief, but very comprehensive, exhortations of the apostle, 1 THESS. v. 14. "Warn them that are unruly; comfort the feeble-minded; support the weak; be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men. Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil; and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And we pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN WILSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXII—1739.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In a fresh and lively sense of the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ manifested unto us, whereby our hearts are enlarged in love to him, and one towards another, we tenderly salute you; with earnest breathings and supplications, that it may please the God and Father of all our mercies, who hath called us by his grace, to preserve us in an humble and lowly frame of spirit before him, sensible of our own infirmities, and in a continual dependence on the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to guide and conduct us in the ways of righteousness and peace, and to establish us on the rock, Christ Jesus, the light, life, strength, and salvation of his people, the foundation of all the righteous generations; in whom the whole flock and family of the faithful, however out-

wardly dispersed, are inwardly united in that bond of peace and love which cannot be broken, and grow up unto one holy temple, an habitation of God, through his Spirit. To whom be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

We have cause in deep humility to bless and praise the name of the Lord our God, for that spirit of love and unanimity which hath eminently attended us in this our Yearly Meeting, from the beginning to the end thereof; humbly beseeching him to continue his fatherly care and visitation, that a real christian concern may grow and increase more and more, for the maintaining an holy discipline in the churches every where; that all things may be done "decently, and in order," to the honour and praise of God, and your own solid peace and comfort.

By accounts received in writing from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, as also by epistles from Wales, North Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, and Barbadoes, we have many acceptable informations respecting the state of the churches; and were particularly comforted and refreshed by the verbal relation of our dear and ancient Friend John Fothergill; being, by the good providence of God, not long since returned from his travels in the service of truth through most of the English plantations in America; whereby it appears, that the Lord by his own power is convincing, opening, and preparing the hearts of people in many places for the reception of his truth in the love of it. And as it is evident, that the Lord is working by his Spirit among the children of men, and is visiting many with his day-spring from on high, and raising in them a desire and thirst after the real, inward, and experimental knowledge of true religion in themselves; and as that blessed progress of the work of the Holy Spirit is matter of unspeakable joy and comfort to the faithful and upright hearted; so it is our earnest desire that those among us, who have been careless and disobedient, may be excited and stirred up, with an holy emulation, to turn unto the Lord, while the day of his merciful visitation is yet extended to them; lest he be provoked to turn away his face, withdraw the light of his countenance, and leave them in a deplorable deprivation of that grace, which, with sorrow be it spoken, too many have slighted and neglected.

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales brought in this year (being chiefly for tithes and church-rates, so called) is three thousand three hundred and sixty-five pounds, and upwards; and of those in Ireland, one thousand four hundred and eighty-five pounds and upwards; making together above four thousand eight hundred and fifty pounds. And we

could heartily wish, that all Friends, who abide faithful in sufferings for their testimony, would bring in their accounts thereof regularly and in due time.

As there is always remaining upon the church a concern for the maintenance of our christian testimony in the several branches thereof, we cannot cease from continually exhorting all the professors of truth to faithfulness and perseverance therein. We therefore exhort that our ancient christian testimony against tithes be duly maintained and kept up; and that those who are found unfaithful therein, be tenderly advised and stirred up to consider that where any decline their testimony in that respect, they do thereby increase the weight and burthen of suffering on those that are faithful, and strengthen the hands of their prosecutors.

It is also our concern earnestly to exhort Friends, both men and women, to watch against the growing sin of pride; and to beware of adorning themselves in a manner disagreeable to the plainness and simplicity of the truth we make profession of. Oh! that they would duly consider that severe reproof, which the Lord, by the mouth of his prophet, pronounced against the haughty daughters of Zion, ISA. iii. where he describes even the particularities of their dressings and ornaments, so displeasing to the Lord, and drawing down his judgments upon them. If those things in that time were so offensive in the eyes of the Lord, how much more are they so now in a people professing the plainness and simplicity which the gospel of Christ recommends? "I will," saith the apostle Paul, "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or pearls, or gold, or costly array; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." 1 TIM. ii. 9, 10. Where he plainly sheweth that such adornings are contrary to the profession of godliness. The apostle Peter also is very full in his exhortations on this subject: "Whose adorning," says he, "let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; for after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." 1 PET. iii. 3, 4, 5. Plainly intimating, that those, who of old were holy, and did trust in God, placed not their delight in such ornaments. Oh! that you would weigh and consider these things! "Let your moderation be known unto all men; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, [but] be ye followers of him, as dear children; walking circumspectly; not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

As in our Epistle of the year 1734, the youth among us were recommended, in much affection, to be careful to avoid all such company, as by a light and vain conversation, doth tend to alienate their minds from the love of virtue and sobriety, we find it our concern to renew the said advice; and earnestly beseech our Friends, and especially the youth among us, to avoid all such conversation as may tend to draw out their minds into the foolish and wicked pastimes with which this age aboundeth; particularly, **BALLS, GAMING-PLACES, HORSE-RACES, and PLAYHOUSES**; those nurseries of debauchery and wickedness; the burthen and grief of the sober part of other societies, as well as of our own; practices wholly unbecoming a people under the christian profession; contrary to the tenour of the doctrine of the gospel, and the examples of the best men in the earliest ages of the church. For, as "evil communications corrupt good manners," so it is the duty of men professing religion, who live in this world in order to obtain a better, not only to "shake their hands from holding of bribes, and stop their ears from hearing of blood," but also, "to shut their eyes from seeing of evil." ISA. xxxiii. 15. And we do exhort all parents of children, and masters of families, to watch over their children and servants; and not only, as much as in them lies, to restrain them from taking such undue liberties, but to inculcate into them an early aversion to such practices, by endeavouring to raise in them a sense of that inexpressible comfort and delight which attends the exercise of true religion and virtue: the relish and taste of which real pleasure, will bring them to see the vanity and emptiness of what men falsely call so; and that the sports and diversions by them used, are but the inventions of degenerate and corrupt minds; who, being ignorant of that solid satisfaction of soul, which is of an enduring nature, vainly attempt to supply the want of it by temporary and fading pleasures; the end of which is anxiety and sorrow.

And, dear Friends; as in the same Epistle we were concerned to recommend a diligent attendance of First-day and Week-day Meetings for worship, and behaviour suitable and becoming those solemn occasions; so we do again recommend the advice given on that head in our last year's Epistle to your especial notice; beseeching you to call to remembrance the care which was upon our ancients for the keeping up their meetings of worship: what longing in their souls for the meeting-day! and when met together, with what awfulness did they sit before the Lord, in expectation of witnessing the blessed promise of Christ fulfilled in and among them; namely, "his being in the midst of them." MATT. xvii. 20. And when witnessed by them, Oh how were their hearts tendered, in a sense of his love and life-giving presence!

Thus did they serve God "in the newness of the Spirit." ROM. vii. 6. thereby demonstrating themselves to be such worshippers as the Father seeks, according to the words of Christ, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth." JOHN iv. 23. "For the Father seeketh such to worship him." Let therefore, we earnestly in-treat, the same concern come over you all, in all your religious meetings; so shall you be "good examples to the flock and heri-tage of God," and encouragers of the youth to come up in that godly practice and necessary duty.

Let none be ashamed of the tendering power of the Lord; but yield to the operation of his word; which is as a fire to burn up, and as an hammer to break in pieces. It was by this that our ancients became a bright and shining people. The Lord himself hath declared his approbation of an humble and contrite state and condition of soul; so that none be ashamed of it. ISAIAH lxvi. 1. "Thus saith the Lord; the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house that ye build un-to me, and where is the place of my rest? for all these things hath mine hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord. But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." And the royal prophet says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken heart. A broken and contrite spirit, O God, thou wilt not despise." PSALM. li. 17.

We therefore humbly pray the God of all our mercies to look down upon us, and incline the hearts of his people to serve him with uprightness and sincerity; that ZION may become the BEAUTY of NATIONS, and the PRAISE of the whole earth.

And now, under a renewed sense of his love and heart-tendering power, we again tenderly salute you, and bid you fare-well.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN HAYWARD.

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXIII—1740.

Dearly Beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the love and fellowship of the gospel of peace and salvation, and in an humble and reverent sense of the goodness and mercy of our heavenly Father, manifested in and among us in this our annual

assembly, wherein the fresh visitations of his grace and good spirit have bowed our souls before him, and engaged us to lift up our hearts in a grateful acknowledgment of the continuation of his spiritual and inestimable blessings, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we tenderly salute you.

It is with hearts filled with joy, that we have experienced, in this our Yearly Meeting, that the Lord is yet graciously pouring forth of his spirit, both upon sons and daughters, and enabling many to be instrumental in his hand for the comforting and establishing of his church and heritage; and hath given us a renewed ground of hope and trust in him, that he will continue to raise up many more, by his spirit, to run to and fro, that knowledge may be increased, and the borders of his sanctuary enlarged, by bringing "his sons from far, and his daughters from the ends of the earth,* to the praise and exaltation of his name; to whom be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

By accounts transmitted to us from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, Rhode-Island, New-England, Long-Island, Virginia, Maryland, North-Carolina, and Barbadoes, we have comfortable relations of the continuance of brotherly love, peace, and unity throughout the churches in general; and that a godly care remains in many places for the preservation of the good order and discipline established among us; and that a fresh visitation of love is extended, to the conviction of some, and bringing them into fellowship with us; wherefore it behoveth us fervently to pray that the Lord may enable us to say with the apostle, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ."†

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales, brought in this year (being generally for non-payment of tithes, and those called church-rates) is three thousand three hundred pounds, and upwards; and of those in Ireland, one thousand five hundred and eleven pounds, and upwards; making together above four thousand eight hundred and thirteen pounds. And our desire is, that Friends would be generally mindful to carry in to their several meetings, from time to time, an account of their respective sufferings, for maintaining the testimony of truth in this respect.

We greatly wish, that the faithfulness and perseverance of those who make profession of the blessed truth, in their christian testimony against the Antichristian oppression of tithes, were so general, as to render our advices on that head unnecessary; but

* ISA. xliii. 6.

† 1 JOHN. i. 3.

while, with grief, we observe a remissness yet remaining among some therein, we cannot but repeat our earnest exhortations, that all may come up in the discharge of their duty, and chuse rather to undergo losses and sufferings in their outward concerns, than to break their inward peace, by complying with any thing which they are convinced in themselves is contrary to the gospel of Christ.

And, dear Friends; we tenderly advise and exhort you, that, in all your assemblies for the worship of Almighty God, you wait to feel your hearts influenced by his power, and in patience and humility possess your souls, depending on Christ alone for instruction; who, whether immediately by his Spirit, or instrumentally by his servants, is the teacher of his people himself; on whose Spirit only ought our whole trust, expectation, and dependence to be. And as you are found humbly waiting for his teaching, without expectation from man, he will administer comfort to your souls, either immediately or instrumentally, as it shall seem good to him, who never faileth those who put their trust in him. And all such, from the experience of the blessings and comforts they receive, will have a due esteem and regard for those through whom they find them conveyed; ascribing nevertheless the praise and glory of all to him alone, whose instruments they are; and who, by his own power and spirit, worketh either with them, or without them, according to his good pleasure, in the various manifestations of his infinite wisdom and goodness towards the children of men.

Beware, therefore, that you assemble not in a mere formal and customary manner; but let both preacher and hearer labour to gather their minds inward to the Lord, that every one may witness him who is the master of our assemblies to go before them, and put them forth in their respective services. The immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit is the foundation of all gospel worship and ministry; and those who depend entirely thereon, shall not be disappointed, through the failure or absence of instrumental means. Wherefore, we beseech you, wait in silence, with reverence and singleness of heart, in all your meetings, that you may witness the incomes and refreshing influences of the Holy Spirit, by which you will be "strengthened in the inward man," and be made to grow and flourish as "trees planted by the rivers of water,"* which bring forth their fruit in due season.

And, dear Friends; as it is recorded in Holy Scripture, that "many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who

* PSALM i. 3.

“ were ancient men, who had seen the first house, when the foundation of the second was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice;”* so many, in this our day, are affected with grief, in comparing the present state of the church with its first beginning; when the members thereof adorned the doctrine of the gospel in their lives and conversations; and the fruits of the Holy Spirit; viz. their patience, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, love, sincerity, truth, humility, self-denial, plainness of speech and habit, were conspicuous to all. Wherefore we earnestly exhort, that Friends every where, who have swerved from the way of truth, would speedily return to their first love, and turn their minds to the inward manifestations of the divine light, which discovers and reproves the deeds of darkness, and leads to purity and holiness, and every good work; begets true unity and fellowship one with another, and a reverent and sacred regard to the truths delivered in the Holy Scriptures.

And, dear Friends; as much as in you lies encourage a frequent and diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures in your families. In them are contained the promises of eternal life and salvation. For as a steady trust and belief in the promises of God, and a frequent meditation in the law of the Lord, was the preservation of a remnant in old time, so it is even to this day. And as a distrust and disbelief of the promises of God, and a neglect of his holy law, was the occasion of the complaints made against the Jews, the posterity of Abraham; even so we have reason to fear, that the apparent declension in our time of true piety and godly zeal, in many places, is too much owing to a disregard of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, and the promises of the Holy Spirit in them recorded. Wherefore it greatly behoves every one, who would be united to Christ, and a member of his church, to believe in the promises of God and Christ, and wait to know the fulfilling of them in his own heart. It was by this the primitive believers became of “ one heart, and of one soul.”† It was by one Spirit; namely, the Spirit promised by Christ, that “ they were “ all baptized into one body.” Having, therefore, dearly beloved, such great and precious promises, and being encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with cheerfulness in the ways of the Lord, and walk in the footsteps of the flocks of the companions; “ looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our “ faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the “ cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of “ the throne of God.”‡

Finally, brethren, we beseech you to stand upon your guard against the allurements and temptations of this evil world; and

* EZRA iii. 12.

† ACTS iv.

‡ HEB. xii. 2.

beware of an ambitious and covetous spirit, by which many are ensnared in too eager a pursuit of earthly enjoyments; the danger of which is thus described by the apostle Paul: "They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* Beware, therefore, dearly beloved, lest you also, being led aside by the love of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, "fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever." Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

EDMUND PECKOVER,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXIV—1741.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In a sense of the unspeakable love of God, manifested through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world;" and under a renewed visitation of the Holy Spirit, the comforter, which he hath sent forth for the healing of the nations, to restore and bring back mankind, who were lost and gone astray; and, through obedience and sanctification, to perfect a people to his praise; we tenderly salute you; earnestly desiring your increase in all spiritual wisdom and understanding; and that, being strengthened with might in your inner man, ye may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called; and, by your fruitfulness in every good work, may give convincing proofs to the world of your faith and love in Christ Jesus, and that the exceeding abundance of his grace bestowed upon you, hath not been in vain.

We have cause, with humility and thankfulness of heart, to bless the name of the Lord our God, for the continuance of his life-giving power and presence amongst us, whereby the souls of many have been refreshed and comforted in this our annual assembly; the affairs whereof have been managed in the uniting spirit of christian love and concord, which hath presided therein,

* 1 TIM. vi. 10, 11.

and under the influence of which, we communicate to you the following particulars :

The accounts by us received this year from the Quarterly Meetings of England and Wales, and the epistles from North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Long-Island, Virginia, Maryland, North-Carolina, and Barbadoes, generally give very comfortable relations of the continuance of a care throughout the churches for the maintaining love, unity, and good order among us. And we understand thereby, that, in many places, sober enquirers after truth are observed to frequent our public assemblies for worship, and to demean themselves there, even in times of silence, with the appearance of sedateness and composure of mind, disposed to the worship of God in "spirit and in truth." And that, in several places, there are some who have been so far convinced, as to join in a public profession of the truth with us; although to our great grief, it also appears, that in some places there is a declension, through neglect and unfaithfulness.

The sufferings of Friends in England and Wales brought in this year, being generally for tithes and church-rates, so called, amount to three thousand eight hundred and thirteen pounds, and upwards; and those of Friends in Ireland, to above one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four pounds, making together five thousand six hundred ninety-seven pounds, and upwards. There are now four Friends prisoners for their testimony against paying tithes; three of them under the severity of being so, for demands which the prosecutor might have more easily recovered. We cannot but renew our exhortations on this occasion, that all who are convinced in conscience of the contrariety of tithes to the nature of the gospel dispensation and ministry, would, notwithstanding such severities, be careful to keep their consciences clear from any mean compliances in this affair; lest they not only lose that peace of mind, which is the support and comfort of faithful sufferers in a cause truly christian, but also strengthen the hands of those oppressors, whose hopes, in the exercise of such severe methods, seem grounded on an imaginary success of the terrors they may impress.

And, dear Friends; we earnestly and principally recommend you in an especial manner to have a continued regard to the perpetual guide and director, which our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, hath sent in his name, even the spirit of truth. To this the primitive church, in the earliest time, was gathered; by this were both Jews and Gentiles baptized into one body; through this one Spirit the believers had access to God; this gave them a right understanding of the things of God; and

it was this that supported them in their testimony against the corruptions of the world, and gave them prevalence over death and darkness. But, alas ! too soon did a disregard to this heavenly guide and director creep in amongst those who professed the christian name, and gradually introduced a grievous and almost universal apostacy from the primitive glory and life of the first professors of that holy and spiritual religion ! Nevertheless it pleased God, after a long and dark night, to cause the light of the gospel day, again to dawn ; to restore paths to walk in ; to revive the long-exploded doctrine of the guidance of the Holy Spirit ; and to lead the observers thereof into the practice of the like purity, plainness and simplicity of the gospel, by which the early christians were distinguished from the men of this world. By closely attending to the conduct of this Holy Spirit in yourselves, you shall experience not only wisdom to know, but power to perform, that which is agreeable to the mind and will of God. This will lead you out of the pride and vanities of the world, and enable you to become followers of Christ Jesus, and subject to his yoke, who was himself an example to mankind of the greatest meekness and humility.

And, dear Friends ; you that are parents of children, be careful, by your own examples, to train them up in that plainness of habit and speech which becomes the professors of our holy religion, and by which our faithful elders were eminently distinguished. A frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures in your families may tend to enforce upon the minds of those under your care the imitation of such your examples, which they will find agreeable to many of the precepts therein contained. So may they be inured to endure the cross, and despise the shame, as becometh followers of our great Lord and master, who “endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.” HEB. xii. 2, 3.

And, dear Friends ; in all your meetings appointed for religious worship, wait with reverence and devotion of heart and soul for the power and life-giving presence of God, which is the crown and diadem of our assemblies. Take care, we beseech you, in this day of ease and liberty, lest a spirit of lukewarmness and indifference prevail over you, to the stopping up the streams of the water of life, and rendering you like the barren heath in the desert, which knoweth not when good cometh. We intreat you to be especially watchful in this behalf, that an indolent and sluggish disposition appear not amongst you, to the stumbling of such serious enquirers as may attend our meetings, in expectation of that life and power, which the observation of your indifference and unconcernedness may give them too just cause to suspect that ye yourselves are strangers to.

And, dear Friends ; “ Let your moderation be known unto all “ men.” Warn those that are rich in this world that they apply not the blessings of God to the indulging their appetites in pleasure and vanity ; but that they “ be ready to do good, and to communicate” to the relief of those who are in necessity. The principal, if not only, satisfaction a man of a truly christian disposition can have, in the affluence and increase of the things of this world, must arise from the greater advantages and opportunities put into his hands of doing good therewith. But, alas ! it is a most melancholy reflection to observe, that the very superfluities of the apparel of one person might sometimes be sufficient to clothe the nakedness of several fellow-creatures.

And, dear Friends ; we find a renewed concern upon our minds to recommend, in much affection, to the youth among us, to be careful to avoid all such company, as, by a light and vain conversation, doth tend to alienate their minds from the love of virtue and sobriety, and to draw them into the foolish and wicked pastimes with which this age abounds, as is more particularly expressed in the Epistle from our Yearly Meeting in 1739.

Finally, brethren, “ Live in love ; and the God of love and “ peace shall be with you. Let us not be weary in well-doing for “ in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

SAMUEL BOWNAS,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXV—1742.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In a fresh and renewed visitation of the love of God, graciously manifested in this our annual assembly, (the sense whereof hath humbled our spirits in thankful acknowledgments to the God and Father of all our mercies,) we tenderly salute you ; earnestly desiring that the churches every where, keeping under the government and guidance of our heavenly head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and waiting for and witnessing the influences of his Holy Spirit, may be directed in the way of truth and righteousness ; that you may be as lights in the world, a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid ;* that others, seeing your good works, may be brought into christian fellowship with you ; and that you, by walking in the light, may more and more experience an inward communion with the Lord in Spirit, and become enabled with the pri-

* MATT. v. 14. 15.

mitive christians, to say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ."*

Our meeting for the affairs of the church hath been large, and the business thereof transacted in a solid and peaceable manner, to our mutual edification and comfort.

The accounts, received this year, from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and Wales, and the epistles from North Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, Virginia, Maryland, North-Carolina and Barbadoes, give us comfortable relations of a christian care remaining on the minds of Friends for the promotion of truth and its testimony; that there is a great openness in many to receive the doctrine of the gospel; and that divers have been added to the church since last year. We have also to acquaint you, that it has pleased the Lord, by the inshinings of the divine light, to visit the inhabitants of some islands, where no settled meetings of Friends have formerly been, to the bowing and tendering some of their hearts, as in the first breaking-forth and morning of our day; and to incline them to assemble together, and silently to wait in spirit and in truth upon the Lord their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the unerring Teacher, who teacheth his people to profit, and leadeth them by the way that they should go.† May they continue under his holy guidance and direction; and, walking answerably to the convictions of grace received, become firmly rooted and established in the truth which they profess.

These accounts of the prosperity of truth minister to us just occasion of joy and satisfaction. But, with grief, we must observe the negligence and remissness of too many, who, while under the profession of the truth, disregarding the instructions of the divine monitor in themselves, turn aside into the follies, vanities, and pastimes of the world, which, under a false shew of innocent amusements, steal away the mind, and render it unfit for the exercise of virtue, and the duties of the christian religion. Wherefore we exhort you, in the love of God, to be watchful one over another in this respect; not with an evil eye, or to expose the failings of any; but, in a christian spirit, endeavour to inform, reclaim, and restore those who are led astray by the allurements of the world, and the deceitfulness of sin; lest peradventure destruction come upon them at unawares.

The sufferings of Friends in England and Wales, brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and church-rates, so called, amount to three thousand five hundred and four pounds and upwards; and those of Friends in Ireland, to above one thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight pounds; making toge-

* JOHN. i. 3.

† ISA. xlvi. 17.

ther, five thousand two hundred and forty-two pounds and upwards. Of the four Friends who were in prison last year, for their testimony against tithes, three of them still continue under close confinement, for small demands, which their prosecutor might have more easily recovered; and another Friend, for the like demands, is made prisoner since the last year.

We earnestly exhort you, as frequently heretofore, zealously to maintain your conscientious testimony against the Antichristian yoke of tithes; and to be careful to collect and bring in an account of your sufferings, sustained by reason of that, or any other branch of your religious and christian testimony.

Dear Friends,

“When the judgments of the Lord are in the earth,” saith the prophet, “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” His judgments have of late been, and still are, very remarkable. Scarcity, even almost to famine, hath been felt in many places: the sword devours multitudes; and the world seems to be in great agitation. May the minds of the faithful be concerned, when under the divine influence, to implore the Almighty, who alone can turn the hearts of princes and rulers, to restore peace on earth! and may we, who profess to be gathered unto “Shiloh, the prince of peace, to whom the gathering of the nations shall be,” demean ourselves as becometh subjects of his peaceable kingdom; who, as the prophet hath foretold, “shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” ISAIA. ii. 4. In all things see that you observe the precepts of our meek, humble, and patient Lord and master; who commanded us “to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us.” MATT. v. 44.

And, dear Friends; we think necessary to renew our former advices to parents and guardians of youth, that, to the utmost of their power, they train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures. Let this be more your care than to gather riches, and heap up wealth for them; which too often, instead of being a blessing, proves hurtful, and the means of indulging youth in pride and luxury: vices to which they are naturally inclined, and which tend to their ruin and destruction. Remember the advice of the apostle, ROM. xii. 16. “Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.” An humble and contented disposition

of mind is only capable of the reception of true happiness, and therein alone are the blessings of God truly enjoyed. This will render you, in your several stations and circumstances, acceptable to God, and exemplary to those who live in an exalted state of vanity, which hath neither stability nor true peace in it.

And, dear Friends; let that known maxim, recommended by the apostle, " Evil communications corrupt good manners," be early inculcated into the minds of your children; and, as much as in you lies, restrain them from going to public places of diversion; the frequenting of which is generally an inlet into grosser evils.

We farther intreat you, that in all your religious meetings, appointed for the worship of Almighty God, you wait in an humble reverence, for the influence of the word of life: be cautious not to move in acts of devotion in your own will; set not forward self to work; but patiently attend and wait for the gift and enlivening power of the divine spirit; without which, your performances will be unacceptable, and like those of old; of which it was said, " Who hath required this at your hand?" ISAIAH i. 12.

And in your meetings for discipline, and the affairs of the church, where different sentiments may sometimes arise, let all be guided by the christian spirit of peace and love; and in every thing disputable, conduct yourselves with that calmness of reasoning which tends to convince the understandings one of another.

Finally, brethren; we recommend you to God, and the word of his grace. Let your conversation be coupled with his fear. As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, become established in the faith, and built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ. To whom be glory, honour and power ascribed, now and for ever. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf, of the said Yearly Meeting, by

JOSEPH HUNTLEY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXVI—1743.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In a fresh remembrance of the gracious visitations of the Lord, and in a renewed experience of his continued goodness, we tenderly salute you ; earnestly desiring, that having our hearts deeply affected with gratitude and love, we may all unite in thankfulness to the Lord our God, who hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities ; but, according to the multitude of his mercies, in Christ Jesus, still continueth to be gracious, reviving and refreshing with the consolations of his spirit the souls of those who are contrite and humble before him, and extending of his grace even to the rebellious, that they may repent and return unto him, and that he may dwell among them. Oh ! that all were wise to observe these things, and to understand the loving kindness of the Lord !

By accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales, and by epistles from North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Long-Island, Virginia, Maryland, New-England and Tortola, we understand, that a fresh spring and visitation of heavenly love hath of late been manifested in divers places, to the reaching and convincing of many ; and particularly that the Lord is inclining the hearts of some young Friends to follow the footsteps of the ancients, in christian purity, plainness, and self-denial ; and that some of their mouths have been opened to bear testimony to the truth, from a living experience ; and, by the constraining power of love, to call unto others to follow the Lord in the way of his requirings : and also that some, who were not educated in our way, observing the comely order amongst us, and the uprightness of life which truth leads its followers into, have been affected with its beauty, and joined themselves unto us ; and that some of these, from a sense of its living power and virtue, are inviting others to come unto Shiloh, the peaceable Saviour, in themselves, and to wait in holy silence to witness him to be their governor and director in all things ; of whose government and peace there never shall be end. Wherefore, dear Friends, we earnestly exhort you, as heretofore, to be fervent and diligent in all your meetings for worship ; that those, who may be inclined to come to our assemblies, may observe the gravity and reverence of your deportment to be such as becometh the worshippers of God in spirit and in truth ; and that, so waiting, we may witness the renewings of the love of

God, and experience, each of us, the fulfilling of his gracious promise of the presence of his Holy Spirit in and among his people.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year, being generally for tithes and church-rates, so called, amount in England and Wales to three thousand one hundred and ninety-five pounds and upwards; and in Ireland, to above one thousand five hundred and thirty-two pounds; making together four thousand seven hundred twenty-eight pounds and upwards. There are yet three Friends remaining prisoners in York-Castle for tithes; but it hath pleased the legislature, in christian compassion to their case, by a particular clause in a late act, to prescribe a means for their discharge; which, we hope, will be effectual.

As the truth, whereunto we have been called, hath led us into a conscientious concern against the payment of tithes, and forced maintenance of ministers, as forbidden by the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, let all maintain their testimony with christian innocence and freedom; and beware, lest, by any indirect methods and mean compliances with their prosecutors, they betray the christian cause in which they are engaged, and minister occasion to suspect their sincerity therein. But in that, and every other branch of our religious testimony, let your conversation among men be answerable to your profession, lest you be stumbling blocks in the way of such serious and thinking enquirers as may come to be convinced of the truth of the principles by us professed.

Dear Friends,

Beware of that wisdom which descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and puffeth up the mind; but be ye, like our great pattern the Lord Jesus, meek and lowly in heart, not seeking your own glory, but the honour of him that hath called you. Be ready to every good office of love, even to the least of Christ's disciples, and he will esteem it as done unto himself: delight to encourage those who are honest and sincere in heart, and to strengthen the feeble-minded under their trials and conflicts; so shall ye become as nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers in the church of God, and be qualified with wisdom from above to administer suitably to the conditions of others, to the comforting of their souls, that they may have cause to bless the Lord on your behalf.

And, dear Friends; under a consideration of the subtle and continual assaults of the enemy of our souls, we find it necessary to put you in mind, that whatever your advancement in the work of religion, or your services in the church, may have been, you have still as great need as ever to dwell in an humble state of

watchfulness. For some, whom the Lord hath favoured with the influences of his love, while their hearts remained low and humble in his sight, have, by giving way to the subtle temptations of the enemy, under the specious pretence of enlargement and freedom of spirit, become exalted in their minds, gradually declined from their first love, and from that tender regard and care which once rested upon their minds towards God; and by an unguarded conduct have lost their esteem and service in the church, and brought dishonour on the blessed truth which they had long professed. Wherefore, "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."*

And inasmuch as many of our faithful elders have been of late taken from us by death, a concern is upon our minds, that their places and services in the church may be supplied; wherefore we advise, as † formerly, that such of our younger Friends, as are sober and hopeful, may be invited and encouraged to attend our meetings for the affairs and business of the church, that they may become useful and serviceable therein, and instrumental to the continuing that good order and discipline which the spirit of truth led our ancient Friends into the practice of; for the same spirit which was their leader must be ours. But if we depart from its holy guidance, the will and wisdom of man will be found unable to build upon that foundation which God hath laid.

And, dear Friends; we think it especially necessary at this time to remind you of the former advices of this meeting, respecting a frequent and diligent reading of the holy Scriptures; the doctrines contained in those inspired writings, duly attended to, and firmly impressed upon the minds of our young people, may be a means of preserving them from the danger and infection of such corrupt and irreligious principles, as, having a tendency to the exaltation of self and human abilities, would lessen their dependence on the power and spirit of God, their only security and preservation.

And as the voice of mortality is ever sounding in our ears, a concern arises in us to exhort all to settle their worldly affairs according to truth and justice, to set their houses in order, and to live in a state of preparation for their departure hence; ever mindful of the advice of the apostle; viz. "Brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they weep not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."‡

* 1 COR. x. 12. † In 1734 and 1737. ‡ 1 COR. vii. 29.

Finally, brethren; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, seasoning your spirits, leavening your conversations with his fear, and enabling you to walk before him in all humility and lowliness of mind, impressing upon your hearts a just sense of the vanity and uncertainty of all things here below, and setting your affections on things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. To whom be glory and dominion ascribed now and for ever. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN WILSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXVII—1744.

Dearlly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the spirit of christian love and charity, which to our exceeding joy and consolation, hath been witnessed to preside in this our general assembly, we tenderly salute you.

Blessed be the God and Father of all our mercies, who, by the influences of his heavenly grace, hath at this time been with us, enlarging the hearts of the faithful with earnest desires for the welfare one of another, and with fervent supplications unto him, who giveth ability for every good word and work, and who alone can bless and sanctify our endeavours for the peace of the church, and the preservation of its discipline.

By the accounts we have received from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, Barbadoes, and Tortola, we understand, that the churches are generally preserved in peace and unity; and that although in too many places a declension from our ancient plainness and simplicity doth appear; yet, in others, the testimony of truth is received with joy, and embraced with readiness of heart, and many are added to the church; so that we have reason to hope and believe, that the Lord will yet comfort Zion, and enlarge the borders of her sanctuary.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year, being generally for tithes and church-rates, so called, amount in England and Wales to two thousand eight hundred thirty-seven pounds, and upwards; and those from Ireland to above one thousand four hundred and sixty pounds, making together four thousand two hun-

dred ninety-seven pounds, and upwards. The three Friends we mentioned last year, then remaining prisoners in York-Castle, are since discharged, pursuant to the means prescribed by an act of the legislature; and we have no account of any Friends committed to prison this year. Several prosecutions are now depending, and others have been put a stop to by the favourable interposition of persons of distinction, and some of them of the priesthood, who have manifested their dislike of such unchristian severities. As Friends continue faithful to their testimony with an open and undisguised plainness and integrity of heart, trusting in the Lord alone, he is pleased to work for their deliverance, in his own appointed time, by such ways and instruments as he sees fit.

And, dear Friends; we find it our concern, at this time, earnestly to intreat and exhort, that the elders in your several Monthly Meetings be mindful of the advice of the apostle, "to watch over the flock of Christ,"* within the compass of their respective meetings; to advise and assist the weak, and to use their christian endeavours for the restoring such as may have wandered and gone astray from the wholesome advices from time to time given forth and recommended by this meeting; and to encourage, with meekness of wisdom, the appearance of good in all; and where they perceive a neglect or remissness, either in particular persons, or in families, of duly attending meetings for worship, that they would visit such in the spirit of love, that so the hindmost of the flock may be brought forward, and none of them be dispersed and lost.

And, dear Friends; in all your religious meetings for the worship of Almighty God, let your minds be seasoned with an awful sense of real and true devotion, and be ye exemplary to the flock of Christ. Let the solemn gravity of your deportment be such, as may demonstrate to others that you are in earnest in the great duty of waiting upon and worshipping God in spirit; that serious and tender hearted enquirers may be encouraged to come and partake in your assemblies of that inward and spiritual consolation and refreshment, which the Lord is graciously pleased to impart unto the souls of such as are humbled in his sight, and approach his holy presence with reverence and fear.

And as it has pleased the Lord, by the breaking forth of the glorious light of his gospel, and the shedding abroad of his holy Spirit, to gather us to be a people to his praise, and to unite us in love, not only one unto another, but to the whole creation of God, by subjecting us to the government of his Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the prince of peace; it behoveth us to hold forth the ensign of the Lamb of God, and, by our patience and

* ACTS XXIX.

peaceable behaviour, to shew that we walk in obedience to the example and precepts of our Lord and master, who hath commanded to "love our enemies, and to do good even to them that hate us." Wherefore we intreat all who profess themselves members of our society, to be faithful to that ancient testimony, borne by us ever since we were a people, against bearing of arms and fighting; that, by a conduct agreeable to our profession, we may demonstrate ourselves to be real followers of the Messiah, "the peaceable Saviour; of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end."*

And inasmuch as the Lord our God, by his good providence, hath preserved this nation from intestine war and bloodshed, it is our duty, with humble thanksgiving, to ascribe our deliverance to his mercy and goodness; and to beseech him, that he would be pleased to shorten his judgments in the earth, by reconciling the world unto himself, and one unto another, through Jesus Christ; that the general reception of his gospel in the hearts of men may enable them to praise the name of the Lord, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."†

Finally, dearly beloved brethren; let nothing of rancour, malice, calumny, detraction, or ‡ backbiting, be known amongst you; but live in love, and witness the aboundings of christian charity; which is so far from evil speaking, that it "thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."§ May your minds be replenished with the wisdom that is from above, which is first "pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." And let the love and life of God rule and reign in all your hearts, that, at the conclusion and winding up of your days, your joy and rejoicing may be in the Lord, and you may be enabled to say with the holy apostle, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."||

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JACOB HAGEN,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

* ISA. ix, 6, 7.

† LUKE ii. 14.

‡ See the Yearly Meeting epistles of 1719, and 1736.

§ 1 COR. xiii.

|| 2 TIM. iv. 7, 8.

EPISTLE LXVIII—1745.

Dearlly beloved Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in brotherly love, and in a fresh and living sense of the continued mercy and loving kindness of the Lord our God; who by the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit is ever present with his church and people, comforting and refreshing the souls of the faithful with divine and spiritual consolation, strengthening and confirming those who are sensible of their own weakness, and administering to the disobedient reproof and instruction, in order to reclaim and restore such as have erred and gone astray; that all of us, as members of one body under Christ, our holy and heavenly head, may experience a growth and increase in christian knowledge and obedience, and that we may walk in all godliness of conversation, to the praise of him who hath called us, that others "seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven. To whom be glory and dominion ascribed now and for ever. Amen."

The affairs of this our annual assembly have been transacted in christian love and concord; and the accounts received from the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, as also epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Maryland, Virginia, and Barbadoes, give us comfortable relations of the prosperity of truth in many places; and that the churches are generally preserved in that spirit of love and unity, which tends to the edification one of another in the most holy faith; and that several persons, in divers places, are convinced of the truth, and have joined themselves in society with us.

We have also been particularly comforted and refreshed by the verbal relations of several ministring Friends, lately returned from their travels, in the service of truth, and propagation of the gospel, through most of the British provinces in America; by which it appears, that a great and effectual door is open for the preaching of the gospel in those parts, many flocking to meetings with an earnest desire to hear the testimony of truth declared, to the comfort and encouragement of those concerned; giving them great hopes of good success in the work of their ministry, and a ground of assurance that their labour of love among them has not been in vain.

Nevertheless, it is with great concern of mind; that, notwithstanding these comfortable accounts of the general disposition of the people, we find ourselves under a necessity to observe a great

declension among too many of the professors of truth, from that christian plainness and humble deportment which our ancient Friends were exemplary in. This declension we apprehend is principally occasioned through a neglect of an inward and reverent waiting upon God, for the influences of his Holy Spirit to lead and guide us in the ways of holiness and truth. This would instruct us, and only can enable us to renounce the world, and its vain and foolish habits and customs; and to persevere in the good old way of simplicity and self-denial; the path which the righteous in all ages have walked in; leaving us an example that we should follow their steps. It was through obedience to this holy guidance that the immediate disciples and followers of our Lord Jesus were enabled to "go unto all nations, and preach the gospel of salvation in the power and authority [or name] of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It was this which qualified many of our ancient Friends to travel into divers parts of the world, to spread the doctrine of truth, and to sow the seed of the kingdom of God. It is through neglect and remissness in attending and waiting upon the Lord, that lukewarmness and indifference creeps in, gradually introducing that declension which the faithful among us, with sorrow of heart, do see and lament.

The account of Friends' sufferings brought in this year from England and Wales, amount to two thousand eight hundred and fifty-two pounds, and upwards; and those from Ireland to above one thousand five hundred and fifty pounds, making together, four thousand three hundred fifty-seven pounds, and upwards, being mostly for tithes and church-rates, so called. One Friend hath been committed to prison since last year; but, after some weeks imprisonment, was set at liberty. Several prosecutions are now depending, the issue of which must be left to the Lord, who, by the secret workings of his Holy Spirit, is exciting a merciful disposition in the hearts of many of the claimers of tithes, to make use of the most easy and favourable methods provided by law for the recovery of their demands.

And seeing the bearing a faithful testimony against the payment of tithes, as oppressive and antichristian, is an acknowledged branch of our christian duty, we tenderly exhort all who profess the truth in that respect, to adorn their profession by an agreeable practice, and not suffer any temporal interest to betray them into the use of indirect methods, by privately contracting with their landlords, or others, to evade that testimony which the plainness and simplicity of truth requires them publicly to main-

tain, and which our ancient Friends were exemplary in, and constant sufferers for.

And, dear Friends, though frequent and repeated advices have been given from this meeting, respecting the education of our youth in sobriety, godliness, and all christian virtues; yet this being a matter of very great moment for the welfare of the present and future generations, we think it our incumbent duty again to recommend an especial care therein; and that all parent and guardians, during the infancy of children, endeavour to impress upon their young and tender minds, a becoming reverence towards Almighty God, their creator; and, as they advance in understanding, to inculcate into them the principles of justice, temperance, and other moral duties, agreeable to the Holy Scriptures. We also recommend to school-masters and mistresses, to educate the children committed to their charge in the frequent reading of those sacred writings, and such other good books as tend to their instruction in true christianity; and to discourage their reading any books of a contrary tendency, whereby their minds are in danger to be corrupted, and led aside from the way of truth and holiness. And we do with earnestness recommend to all such parents as have experienced the gracious dealings of the Lord with their own souls, to take all proper opportunities of instilling into the minds of their children just sentiments respecting the vanity and emptiness of fading and transitory enjoyments, and to direct them to seek after that solid peace and serenity of mind which attends the sincere practice of true religion and virtue, and which only can afford any durable and solid satisfaction. Such a godly care in parents is agreeable to the command of God, by his servant Moses, to the people of Israel, DEUT. xi. 18. "Ye shall lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

And, dear Friends; we exhort you closely to adhere to our first principle of humbly, sincerely, and diligently waiting upon the Lord, that you may witness his Holy Spirit to influence and direct you in all your words and actions: and as you attend with a single eye to its holy and unerring directions, you will be preserved from looking outward, and having your expectation from abroad; always remembering the saying of our blessed Lord and Saviour, "If any man shall say to you, lo, here is Christ, or lo, he is there, believe him not," MARK xiii. 21. ; but let every one

of you in particular closely attend to the voice of the Holy Spirit in his own soul, which only can secure you from being drawn aside by the doctrines and traditions of men, and enable you to say, with Simon Peter, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." JOHN vi. 68.

And we do recommend to all Friends, to be careful, at the conclusion of our meetings for worship, than an holy awe and reverence be so impressed upon their minds, as that the effect thereof may be evidenced by the gravity of their conversation; and that they may be particularly watchful over their words and actions, lest, by their immediately entering into discourses about the affairs and concerns of this life, they manifest that their minds do not remain leavened with that holy sense of divine and heavenly things, which, through such, their religious meetings, they should have experienced, and been seasoned with.

And, dear Friends; we desire that your several Monthly-Meetings, where any school-master, or mistresses of our profession may reside, would not be wanting to admonish them, as much as in them lies, to bring up the children of Friends, committed to their care, in a plainness of speech and apparel, agreeable to the profession we make; and that such of them as have boarders in their families, would frequently call them together, and accustom them to a solemn reading of the Holy Scriptures, and press and excite them to the observatiou of the christian precepts therein contained; and that they themselves walk before them as examples of that plainness and simplicity they recommend.

Finally, dear Friends and brethren; in all your religious assemblies, wait in a true composure of spirit for the enjoyment of the presence of the Lord, which giveth life and ability to offer up an holy sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and that pure incense of a broken and contrite spirit, which is truly acceptable in his sight. Let the operation of his spirit have free course and work in all your hearts; and be not ashamed of its tendering power, which subjects the inordinate affections and will of the creature to the obedience of the cross of Christ. "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the spirit; despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from all appearance of evil; and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And we pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless

“unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 THESS. v. 15, to 23.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly-Meeting, by
JOHN GURNEY,
Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE LXIX—1746.

Dearly Beloved Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in brotherly love, and under a renewed sense of the merciful dealings of the Lord our God, in continuing to us the visitations of his Holy Spirit, and in graciously favouring this our annual assembly with the enjoyment of his presence, to the enlarging our hearts in fervent affection one towards another, and raising earnest desires for the preservation of the whole flock and family of God, in that holy state of reverence, humility and contrition of soul before him, wherein we may experience the consolations of the Lord, who hath promised to “dwell with him “that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the “humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”* Let therefore “the lofty looks of man be humbled, and his haughtiness bowed down ;” that “the Lord alone, and his power, may “be exalted.”

By accounts from the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by epistles read in this meeting from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, Maryland, North-Carolina, and Barbadoes, we have accounts of the welfare of our Friends in general, and that many people resort to our public assemblies for worship, with a desire of hearing the testimony of truth declared ; and that divers of them have been convinced, and are joined in profession with us ; and we have cause to hope that the seed sown among them, in due season, will yet farther spring up, to the praise of the great Lord of the harvest, who though one may plant, and another may water, alone can give the increase.

The accounts of Friends’ sufferings, brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and church-rates, so called, amount in England and Wales to two thousand seven hundred and fourteen pounds and upwards ; and those from Ireland, to one thousand six hundred eighty-seven pounds and upwards ; making to-

* ISA. lvii. 15.

gether four thousand four hundred and two pounds and upwards.

And, dear friends ; as every one of us shall come to live in an holy subjection to the spirit of truth in himself, he will clearly discern the weight and necessity of abiding faithful to its discoveries in every branch of our christian testimony. It will instruct us to form a right judgment respecting ourselves, and show us what our life is, " even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, " and then vanisheth."* It will teach us the knowledge of the world, and its uncertainty : it will wean us from all dependence on earthly things, to place our affections on things that are above : it will withdraw us from the inordinate love of temporal enjoyments, to the earnest expectation of eternal felicity ; from that which perisheth with the using, to the reward of the righteous, the crown of glory that fadeth not away. The great deception of mankind is, that they look for happiness where it is not, are insnared by the love of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, which " while some have coveted after, they have erred from the " faith," have abused what they should have made good use of, and hurt themselves with the means given for the help of others ; the love of money shutting up their hearts from the exercise of charity, in proportion to the substance bestowed on them. Wherefore we admonish those, whom God hath blessed with outward riches, not to trust therein, but to be mindful of the precept of the apostle, " to do good, and to communicate, forget not ; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."†

And, dear Friends ; it is matter of grief to the faithful among us, to observe a visible declension in too many, from that fervour, love, and zeal, which our ancient Friends were endued with, for the honour of God and the promotion of his truth. Too many are departing from that plain and self-denying life of Jesus, our holy head, in which they were found. Alas ! how is that pious devotion and reverence of soul, that brokenness and contrition of spirit, conspicuous in their religious assemblies, abated ; and how careless and indifferent do too many now-a-days appear, in that most important concern of worshipping the Lord of life and glory in an awful silence, and with earnest breathings for the renewings of his living power and presence. Oh ! that all might be stirred up to follow the steps of our worthy elders, in an holy contempt of this world, and in that christian courage and patience, which supported them under the reproaches of men, and the opposition they met with from the spirit of the world. Oh ! that we might walk after their example, preferring the love of truth to the love of earthly things, and the honour of God to the honour of man.

* JAMES iv. 15.

† HEB. xiii. 16.

We also beseech you, dear Friends ; who are young in years, early to submit to the operation of the Holy Spirit in your own hearts ; considering yourselves as always in the presence of the Lord, who sees and knows all your thoughts, words and actions. Let his holy fear preside in your hearts, which can enable you to “ flee youthful lusts, which war against the soul ;” and can transform you, by the renewing your minds into the likeness of Christ Jesus, “ that ye may prove what the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God is.” Obedience to the righteous law of God, written in the heart of man, is the way to true and lasting peace. Our earnest desire is, that the youth of this generation may be raised up to supply the place of those who are gone to rest : that the work of the Lord may be carried on, and we may be continued a people to his praise, and qualified earnestly to “ contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.”

And, dear Friends ; from what we have lately beheld of the calamities of the sword, we have cause to bow in thankfulness to the Lord : who, by his over-ruling Providence, hath check'd its progress in this nation. Let us pray, that the Lord would hasten the promised time, when “ he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”* And let us also, as the Lord shall open our hearts, and influence our minds, make our “ supplications and prayers for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty : for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.”†

And as it hath pleased the Lord, in his abundant mercy, to appear for the deliverance of us and the nation in general, in time of outward distress, and to preserve the king and his government from the wicked attempts of those who rose up against them, and to continue unto us the enjoyment of our civil and religious liberties, it is our duty to express our thankfulness to the Lord, and to acknowledge his might, manifested in the day of danger ; not only in words and expressions, but in an awful and reverent walking in all holy conversation and godliness, to the praise and honour of his holy name, who is blessed for ever.

Finally, brethren ; we commend you to the grace of God, and to the guidance of his Holy Spirit in all your conduct, and bid you farewell in the Lord. Let a grateful sense of his mercies make a deep impression on every mind. “ Be perfect : be of

* ISA. ii. 4.

† 1 TIM. ii. 1. 3.

“good comfort : be of one mind : live in peace : and the God of
“love and peace shall be with you.”

Signed in and on behalf of the said Yearly-Meeting, by

JOHN FRY.

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXX—1747.

Dearly Beloved Friends and Brethren,

It has pleased the Lord our God measurably to favour this our annual assembly with a renewed visitation of his love, to the comfort and refreshment of the souls of such as in humility and reverence have been bowed before him ; so that we have fresh occasion to praise his name, for the continuance of his goodness to us ; and, in a sense of our own weakness, to magnify his power and might, who hath hitherto preserved us ; and to acknowledge, with the Psalmist, “Thou Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, “and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.” May the sense of his gracious dealings towards us be a mean of enlarging our hearts in fervency of affection one towards another, that we may mutually exhort and encourage each other to a steady perseverance in the path of truth and righteousness, which, by the guidance of his grace, he hath directed our feet into.

By the accounts brought in from the several Quarterly Meetings of Friends in England ; as also by epistles received from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, New-England, Maryland, Long-Island, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Barbadoes, Virginia, and Tortola, we have comfortable relations of the prosperity of truth, and that love and unity is preserved in the churches ; that there is, in some places, an addition to the church by convincement ; and that many there are, who being rightly concerned to keep to the divine principle of light and life in themselves, have come to experience a growth and establishment therein. By following the leadings of this heavenly principle of divine grace, our worthy ancients were brought to an inward fellowship and holy communion in the one Lord, one faith, and one baptism ; by which they became sensible not only of their own inward state, but had also a sympathy and concern raised in them for the welfare of others : watching over one another for good, and in christian freedom and plainness of speech exhorting, the remiss, reproving offenders, encouraging the weak, and bringing

forward the hindmost of the flock : which brotherly concern conduced to the gathering of many, and to their strength and confirmation in the blessed truth. A practice, which we fear, is too much neglected, though worthy of our imitation, and which we earnestly recommend to all who have the truth at heart.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year, being generally for tithes, and church-rates, so called, amount in England and Wales, to two thousand seven hundred thirty-three pounds and upwards ; and in Ireland, to one thousand five hundred fifty-two pounds and upwards ; making together, four thousand, two hundred eighty-six pounds, and upwards. One Friend is discharged out of prison since last year ; and one Friend is detained in prison upon prosecution in the ecclesiastical court ; for whose discharge endeavours have been used, but hitherto without success.

And, dear Friends ; we find it our concern at this time to remind you, that as the original purpose and design of these our annual assemblies, as also of our Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, was the exercise of a prudent and christian care and oversight of the churches in general, that peace and good order might be maintained, and that all of us might adorn our profession of godliness with good works ; it behoveth us, in all such our assemblies, to have our minds seasoned with a sense of the weight of the work we are engaged in, and to exert ourselves with an holy zeal for the cause of God, and the promotion of his truth ; carefully watching against an exalted spirit, which would strive for mastery and dominion ; labouring in love and meekness of wisdom to be helped one unto another, that “ nothing may be done through strife, or vain glory : but in lowliness of mind let each esteem “ other better than themselves.”*

We also think it proper to renew our former exhortations, and and again to excite you to a diligent attendings of meeting for divine worship, both on First-days, and other days of the week ; and that you be careful to observe the hour appointed for meeting ; and, when met, to wait in awful silence for the manifestations of the divine life ; guarding against a dull and heavy disposition, and labouring to bring your thoughts into a quiet subjection to the Spirit of Christ ; not having your eye to man, but fixing your expectation on the Lord alone, who is a rich rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

We also tenderly remind you of that christian simplicity and self-denial which our ancient Friends were in the practice of. Their plainness of speech and apparel was remarkable ; and the scorn and derision they patiently underwent on those accounts, did demonstrate that their practice therein proceeded not from

* PHIL. ii. 3.

an affectation of singularity, but was purely conscientious. But, alas! how are many degenerated in these respects! and, by a mean compliance with the customs and fashions of this present evil world, under the mistaken notion of rendering themselves agreeable to others, are indeed become contemptible even in the eyes of those they seek to please; the more thinking part of whom have observed, that a departure from the primitive plainness of our predecessors frequently opens a door to the practice of such pleasures, follies, and corruptions of the times as they were redeemed from, and conscientiously forsook; it being a just remark, that a revolting from the form of godliness is often attended with the loss of the power of it.

And, dear Friends; notwithstanding the repeated and earnest advices of this meeting, in respect to the education of our children, we again see cause to remind you of this important and necessary duty. For although virtue passes not by lineal succession, nor piety by inheritance; yet we trust that the Almighty will have an especial and gracious regard to the sincere endeavours of those parents, who have an early and constant care and concern for the welfare of their offspring, earnestly labouring to instruct them in the fear of the Lord, and in an humble waiting for, and feeling after, those secret and tender visitations of divine love, which the Lord has graciously afforded for the help and instruction of all. Be ye therefore stirred up to a faithful discharge of your duty, being examples to them, in meetings, in your families, and in your employments, of a diligent humble watchfulness, and steady regard to the guidance of that holy principle in yourselves, which you are recommending unto them. Add to this the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, and such other books as tend to inculcate the precepts of a pious and virtuous life on their tender minds; which may be an effectual preservative against the infection of such writings as have a contrary tendency. So shall your endeavours be attended with a reasonable hope of success, and the continuance of the blessing of the Most High rest on you and your posterity. "Train up," saith Solomon, "a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."*

Finally, dear brethren; "Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."† Always remembering, that "the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the

* PROV. xxii. 6.

† 1 PET. v. 5.

“ snares of death.” And that “ in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence ; and his children shall have a place of refuge.”

We salute you in brotherly love, and in the fellowship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and for ever. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

HENRY BRADFORD,

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE LXXI—1748.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in the unity of the Spirit, the bond of peace, earnestly desiring your growth and establishment in the truth ; and that “ through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, “ and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, ye may be preserved through faith unto salvation, and made partakers of that inheritance which is incorruptable, and fadeth not away ; a lively “ hope whereof is given unto us by the resurrection of Jesus “ Christ from the dead. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look “ for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found in peace, “ without spot, and blameless. And beware, lest ye also, being “ led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness : but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord “ and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory, now and for ever. “ Amen.”*

As to the transactions of this our annual assembly, we acquaint you, that the business thereof hath been carried on in a spirit of love, to the great comfort and satisfaction of all concerned therein.

By the accounts and epistles read in this meeting, from the several counties in England, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Long-Island, Maryland, and North-Carolina, we have comfortable relations of the preservation of love and unity in the churches, and of a good disposition continuing in many places to hear the testimony of truth declared, of which some have been lately convinced ; whence we have good reason to believe, that the Lord, by the renewed visitations of his blessed Spirit, is still preparing and raising up instruments to bear witness to his truth, and to supply the places of

* 2 PET. iii. 17.

those faithful elders whom he hath removed from their labours, and received into the rest prepared for his people.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in this year from England and Wales, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, is two thousand eight hundred sixty-four pounds, and upwards; and of those from Ireland, one thousand four hundred thirty-nine pounds, and upwards; making together four thousand three hundred and four pounds, and upwards. The Friend who was last year detained in prison, in consequence of an excommunication issued against him from the ecclesiastical court, still continues under close confinement, where he has remained about two years and an half.

And as you cannot but be sensible of the importance of standing clear in our ancient testimony against the Antichristian yoke of tithes, be not slack to admonish all such as be found unfaithful therein; endeavouring in brotherly love to inform and reclaim them.

And, dear Friends; as we profess to be disciples and followers of him who is the prince of peace, we have long seen with grief the calamities of war and discord among mankind; and it is with joy we behold the prospect of approaching peace; for the perfecting of which, may the God of love and peace grant success to the endeavours of our king, the common father of his people, under whose government we enjoy the inestimable blessings of our civil and religious liberties; for which it behoveth us still to demonstrate our gratitude by due returns of fidelity and affection.

And, dear Friends; our advice and exhortation is, that all masters of families, parents, guardians, and tutors of children, would frequently put in practice the calling together of their children and household, to wait upon the Lord in their families; that receiving wisdom and counsel from him, they may be enabled seasonably to exhort and encourage them to walk in the way of the Lord; to exercise themselves in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in observing the duties and precepts of holy living therein recommended; admonishing them to keep to that plainness and simplicity in apparel, speech, and behaviour, which the spirit of truth led our forefathers into, and which becomes the humble, self-denying followers of Holy Jesus. Also that they would use their endeavours to restrain the youth committed to their charge, from frequenting play-houses, and other public places of diversion, by shewing them the evil tendency thereof, and the danger of their minds being drawn aside thereby, from a solid and serious attention to the great duty of life, the practice of true religion and virtue.

We also remind you, to stand upon your guard against all

whispering, backbiting, and detracting spirits, who busy themselves in spreading evil-surmisings one of another; and to discourage every practice of that nature; observing the advice of the apostle, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."* Always mindful of the precepts of our Lord, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."†

And, in all your assemblies for religious worship, let your minds be retired, and your thoughts abstracted from earthly and temporal affairs, and fixed on things that are above; that your minds may be seasoned with an holy awe and reverence, and your affections weaned from earthly things, and so stayed and settled upon heavenly and holy concerns, that you will not be apt, as the manner of some is, at the close of your meetings, hastily to enter into discourses about the affairs of this life, much less the vain amusements thereof; a practice inconsistent with that christian gravity, which at such time ought, in an especial manner, to season the minds of persons so lately assembled for the worship of God in spirit and in truth.

We also tenderly exhort, that, in all your meetings for the discipline of the church, you wait in humility to have your own spirits brought into any holy subjection to the spirit of Christ; that thereby you may be duly qualified for the work and service conducive to the building up his church. In which work, all who are engaged should be men of upright hearts, and clean hands, rightly prepared for the service they undertake.

And, dear Friends; we earnestly caution and intreat all such among you, as find themselves concerned in christian love to exhort and admonish others, that they be especially careful of their own conduct; that by circumspect walking in all holiness of life and conversation, they may become living examples of the purity and excellence of the advices they recommend.

And inasmuch as the time of our sojourning here on earth is short, and very uncertain, a timely preparation for our departure hence is a necessary point of christian prudence; wherefore we advise, that Friends every where be careful, not only to settle their temporal affairs while time and opportunity is afforded them; but also to endeavour, through the whole course of their conversation here, to walk "as strangers and pilgrims, abstaining from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"§ and having an eye to the recompense of reward, reserved in heaven for those

* EPH. iv. 31, 32.

† MAT. vii. 12.

§ 1 PET. ii. 11.

who continue in faith and patience to the end of the race that is set before them.

Finally, dear Friends; live under a continual sense of the mercy and goodness of the Lord our God towards us. "Be not high-minded, but fear." Pray without ceasing, that you may be preserved a people to his praise, abiding under the government of the spirit of Christ; that his name and power, through you, may be magnified and exalted in the earth; and that, at last, you may receive "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

GILBERT THOMPSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXII—1749.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the pure love of the gospel, and a degree of the enjoyment of that peace which passeth all understanding, we salute you; earnestly desiring your steady perseverance in the way of truth, and that ye may be preserved, by the power of God, in all holiness and purity of conversation, adorning the holy profession we make of worshipping the Father of spirits in spirit and in truth.

It has pleased the Lord, according to his wonted goodness, to favour this our assembly with the comforts of his Holy Spirit and presence, preserving us in peace and concord, and enabling us to proceed in the business brought before us with brotherly love and condescension.

By accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England; and by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Virginia, New-York, New-Jersey and Pennsylvania, Rhode-Island, Barbadoes, and Tortola; we are informed of the present state of the churches, of an addition in some places to the number of the convinced, and of the continuance of an earnest desire for maintaining the testimony of truth in its several branches, and endeavouring, in a spirit of love and meekness, to reclaim those who have erred and gone astray. May such an holy concern every where increase! that having a sincere love, and fervent charity among ourselves, we may co-operate for the improvement and establishing one of another in the most holy faith.

The sufferings of Friends, brought in this year from England and Wales, chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount

to two thousand eight hundred and six pounds and upwards; and those from Ireland, to one thousand six hundred and five pounds and upwards. The Friend mentioned last year to be imprisoned, in consequence of an excommunication issued from the ecclesiastical court, still remains under close confinement, having continued prisoner about three years and an half. There is also another Friend now in prison for tithes.

The remissness and neglect of many, in observing our ancient testimony against the Antichristian yoke of tithes, is too obvious. Wherefore we again earnestly recommend to your several meetings, zealously to exhort and admonish all such as continue unfaithful, and endeavour to bring them up to a sense of the necessity and importance of their standing clear in a point so opposite to christian liberty, and to the free dispensation of a gospel ministry.

And, dear Friends; as it hath pleased God to give success to the endeavours of the king our sovereign, for perfecting a general peace, we think it our duty to express our gratitude on that occasion. Let us all walk worthy of so great a blessing; and in the enjoyment of our civil and religious liberties, be careful to exercise a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward men; putting up "supplications and prayers for the king, and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty."*

We think it needful to remind you, that in all our assemblies for worship, you humbly wait to know your minds retired, and abstracted from temporal affairs, that your expectation and dependence may be on the Lord alone. And as there are Friends well qualified, who, from a true and living concern for the spreading of truth among the people, are induced, in the love of God, to travel to and fro, that the knowledge of true religion may increase, we recommend, that when any such shall visit your respective meetings, Friends would be industrious in giving notice to their enquiring neighbours and acquaintance, of such opportunities; that the service of those faithful labourers may be the more extensive and effectual.

And, dear Friends; we earnestly advise you, that in your meetings for the discipline of the church, all be careful to keep under an holy subjection to the spirit of Christ; that so the affairs of truth may be carried on in love and meekness; that "nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves: and do all things without murmurings and disputings. Let the elders that rule well among you, be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. Likewise ye

* 1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

“younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea all of you be subject one to another, and be cloathed with humility.”* So shall God, who “giveth grace unto the humble, exalt you in due time,” and make you serviceable in the church, to the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, that ye may become a peculiar people, redeemed from the corruptions of the world, and preserved in “fervent charity one towards another;” that our union and concord in the Holy Spirit may be increased, and the good order of the church of Christ may be upheld on its ancient foundation.

The several advices and exhortations formerly given forth by this meeting, and particularly in our epistle of the last year, viz. frequently to wait upon the Lord in your families; to exercise yourselves in often reading the Holy Scriptures, and observing the excellent precepts therein contained; to keep to that plainness and simplicity in apparel, speech, and behaviour, which the spirit of truth led our ancestors into; to restrain the youth under your charge from play-houses and other public places of diversion, the nurseries of vice and immorality; to stand upon your guard against all whispering, backbiting, and detracting spirits; and to discourage every practice of that nature; are again earnestly recommended to your serious consideration and practice.

And, dear Friends; as our forefathers and predecessors were led and directed by the spirit of truth publicly to proclaim the sufficiency of the grace of God inwardly manifested in the hearts of all the children of men; we earnestly desire, that above all things the directions of this heavenly monitor in ourselves may be carefully observed, which will give us the clearest view of our several and respective duties, and guide us into all truth. From a disregard to this heavenly and universal principle of divine light, and disobedience to its holy guidance, proceed that ignorance and depravity which have overspread too many of the professors of christianity. Let us, therefore, who are in an especial manner favoured with the knowledge of the truth inwardly revealed, and in some degree made experimental witnesses of its power and efficacy, beware, lest any of us also fall away, and lose sight of that inward and unerring guide, which alone is able to keep us stedfast and unmoveable in the practice of pure and undefiled religion, preserve us from the spots and pollutions of the world, make us wise unto salvation; and enable us to perform that which is good and acceptable in the sight of God. To whom for the comfortable influences of his Holy Spirit, and all other his

* PAUL. ii. 3. 14. 1 TIM. v. 17. 1 PET. v. 5.

manifold blessings, both spiritual and temporal, be glory, dominion, and praise ascribed, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, now, and for ever. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN FOTHERGILL,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXIII—1750.

Dearlly beloved Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in fervency of affection, ardently desiring your preservation in stedfastness of the faith, purity of doctrine, and holiness of life and conversation, to the praise of him who hath called us to bear a testimony against the errors and corruptions of the world, and to be a peculiar people to himself, zealous of good works.

We have renewed cause to bless the name of the Lord our God, in that he yet continues to favour us with the gracious visitations of his Holy Spirit, which we have measurably experienced to preside in this our annual assembly, to the encouragement and consolation of the faithful, and the enlarging of their hearts one towards another, in a spirit of love, peace, and concord, wherein the affairs and concerns of the church have been transacted and carried on, during the whole course of this our meeting; in which we have received many comfortable accounts from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Barbadoes, and Tortola, of the preservation of the churches in a state of love and union; and of an openness in the hearts of many, in divers places, to hear the testimony of truth declared; whence we have cause to hope, that a work of conviction is going forward, and that many will be gathered to the spirit of truth in themselves, and to a faithful obedience to its dictates and requirings.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year, being principally for tithes and church-rates, so called, amount in England and Wales to two thousand six hundred and eighty pounds, and upwards; and those of Ireland to one thousand five hundred and sixty-four pounds, and upwards. Two Friends have been several years imprisoned, and have continued under close confinement,

in consequence of excommunications issued from the ecclesiastical courts, after prosecutions commenced there against them for tithes : one of whom we hear lately died in prison. And for the same cause two others are committed to prison since last year, by process out of the court of Exchequer.

And, dear Friends ; we think meet to remind you, that the several branches of our christian testimony, which our worthy elders were called to bear, and for which they patiently underwent a fight of afflictions, were not taken up in their own will and wisdom, but effectually impressed upon their minds by the divine operation of the Holy Spirit of Christ, convincing their understandings, and strengthening them to walk in obedience to the convictions received. Thus were they enabled to stand faithful for the truth upon earth, and to leave us a noble and christian example, that we might follow their steps. Let us, in this day of more ease and tranquility, beware, lest we be drawn aside to decline from the testimonies they bore ; and, through the deceivableness, of unrighteousness, with which the unwearied adversary of souls is laying wait to insnare us, have our understandings so darkened, as not to discern the importance of those testimonies which our fathers were led to a perfect sight of, and steady perseverance in, by the light of Christ, that unerring guide, which, if we follow, will direct us in the same path.

We are also concerned to remind you of that holy and religious exercise of mind, which was conspicuous among our ancient Friends in their assemblies for the worship of God ; wherein, by humble waiting upon him in a devout and reverent frame both of body and mind, they experienced a renewing of their strength in him, and were made partakers of the joy of his salvation. But, alas ! it is matter of exceeding grief to the sincere and wise-hearted now among us, to observe that manifest lukewarmness and indifferency, which too many under our profession discover by their deportment in our religious assemblies, in a manner void of that gravity, devotion, and reverence, which necessarily attend the worshippers of God in spirit and in truth ; and by which their souls are humbled in his holy presence, and made meet to receive of the heavenly consolations of his Spirit, who " hath respect unto the lowly, but beholdeth the proud afar off."

And, dear Friends ; we earnestly exhort and intreat you to abide stedfast in the faith of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; and to take heed lest any of you be seduced by the craft and subtilty of designing men, some of whom have published books tending to alienate the minds of men from the true and saving faith, and to lead them to a disesteem of the Holy Scriptures, and

the principles of the christian religion therein contained. Beware, lest any of you, who profess to follow the light of Christ, be drawn aside from the simplicity of his truth, and diverted from your obedience to his holy Cross, by imbibing such principles as would promote a disbelief of his gospel, and of the important doctrines revealed in the Holy Scriptures, necessary to be believed, in order to the salvation of those to whom they are so revealed. And as the doctrine of future rewards and punishments is clearly declared of in holy writ, and is a doctrine of the christian religion, tending to excite men to the practice of virtue, and deter them from vice, beware lest any of you be drawn aside from the purity of the faith in this respect, into a pernicious and dangerous error. But follow ye the guidance of the light of Christ, which only can infallibly secure you from being "led away by the error of the wicked, and falling from your own stedfastness."

And we tenderly exhort, that where Friends in their Monthly Meetings, have knowledge of any of their members who have received, or may be in danger of receiving, principles destructive either of religion or morality, they would deal with all such in a spirit of love, in order to shew them the dangerous situation they are in, and, if possible, to convince them of their errors, and reclaim them therefrom.

And, dearly beloved; as it has pleased the Lord to favour many amongst us with the outward blessings of this life, in so plentiful a manner, as that we are placed in a capacity of doing much good, and of exercising the offices of christian love and charity, to the comfort and assistance of the poor and needy; we earnestly recommend to the practice of those whom God hath so favoured, the excellent advice given by the apostle, 1 TIM. vi. 17, 18, 19. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded; nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do good; that they be rich in good works; ready to distribute, and willing to communicate. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

We forbear, at this time, the repetition of many advices heretofore given you, and recommend you to the heavenly guidance of the Holy Spirit in yourselves, which will instruct you to "avoid every appearance of evil, and is able to preserve your whole spirit, soul, and body blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And, dear Friends; as it hath pleased God, by late amazing instances of his Almighty and tremendous power in shaking the

earth, to excite in the hearts of men just apprehensions of that sudden destruction which their iniquities had deserved, it becometh every sensible soul, in the depth of humility, to admire the wonderful mercy of a gracious God, who, by hitherto withholding the judgments threatened, doth demonstrate that he is “long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Oh that these instances of the divine displeasure may produce in all the like effects as in the Ninevites of old, that they may “cry mightily unto God; yea, that every one may turn from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands!” The consequence of which was, that “God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way,” and in his mercy forbore to execute the judgment denounced by his prophet against them. JONAH iii, 8, &c.

Finally, brethren; under a devout and humble sense of the Almighty power of God, and of his abundant mercy toward the children of men, we take our leave of you: recommending you all to the grace of God, earnestly desiring that you may be preserved thereby in love and peace, and in purity of life and conversation. That the God of peace may continue to bless you, and be with you, and enable you, in a grateful acknowledgment of his manifold mercies, to ascribe unto him thanksgiving, glory, dominion, and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for ever and ever.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN GURNEY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXIV—1751.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

Being, through the goodness of God, and continuance of his merciful providence over us, met together again in our annual assembly, we salute you, under a renewed sense and grateful remembrance of the love of Christ, our Saviour, and of the free extendings of his universal grace, and of the blessed influence of his Holy Spirit, the teacher and guide of the faithful throughout all generations; by which he visited, called, and led our forefathers in the way wherein they walked; teaching them to forsake the vanities, corruptions, and false worships of the world, and enabling them to persevere both in holiness of life, and purity of doctrine; wherein having passed the time of their sojourning here, according to the will of God, they fell asleep, and were received

into his rest; leaving unto us, their successors in profession of the same faith, an example that we also should walk in the same steps, to the praise of him who hath hitherto preserved us, and who alone is able to “perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us.” To whom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, praise, and dominion for ever. Amen.

The several affairs and concerns of the churches which have come before us, have been considered and concluded in a measure of that spirit of brotherly love and unanimity, wherein the true fellowship and communion of the saints is held, and which we earnestly desire may continually preside in the churches of Christ every where, enabling each particular member of the one body to perform their several and respective offices therein, to the preservation of the whole in peace and concord, and to the mutual edification one of another in the most holy faith.

The intelligence communicated unto us, by accounts from the Quarterly Meetings of Friends in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, North-Carolina, Rhode-Island, Long-Island, and Tortola, furnish us with comfortable observations of a religious concern subsisting in many places for the conservation of christian brotherhood, maintenance of good order and discipline in the church, and upholding the testimony of truth in its several branches. That such a necessary care and holy concern may become general, let us humbly supplicate the Almighty, that he may be pleased to fill us with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may be made instruments in his hand, fitly qualified for the service of his church, and promotion of his blessed truth in the earth.

The accounts of Friends’ sufferings brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes and church-rates, so called, amount in England and Wales to the sum of three thousand and twenty-five pounds, and upwards, and those from Ireland, to the sum of one thousand seven hundred and sixty pounds, and upwards. There are four Friends now remaining prisoners; two of them in consequence of processes in the ecclesiastical courts.

Dear Friends,

As the profession by which we are peculiarly distinguished, is that of subjection and obedience to the light and spirit of Christ, it is incumbent on us, in an especial manner, to be found walking therein; for, saith the beloved disciple, “If we say that we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ,

“his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”* Wherefore, brethren, let us consider what manner of persons we ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness; that through the sanctifying virtue of the Lord Jesus Christ, cleansing and purging us from the corruptions of the world, we may be qualified to stand before him with acceptance, and discharge the duties of our respective stations in the church to God’s honour, and the comfort of his people. To promote this blessed purpose, suffer, we intreat you, the word of exhortation; and receive it in the same spirit of love wherein it is by us communicated.

Dear Friends,

We having, in this our solemn assembly, the welfare of our Zion greatly at heart, recommend the appointment of sensible Friends, of unblameable conversations, to visit the families of their brethren in christian love, and in the wisdom and peaceable spirit of truth to inform, admonish, and advise, as occasion may be. This exercise of brotherly love has had a good effect in some places. We therefore earnestly intreat Friends, in their respective Monthly Meetings, to use their best endeavours to bring the same into general practice. And as we desire that solid and judicious Friends, on the one hand, would with a ready mind give up to this service: so, on the other hand, we also advise, that Friends who shall be visited in consequence of such appointments, would be freely willing to afford a brotherly opportunity to such who so visit them, of discharging the care and duty herein by them lovingly undertaken.

And, dear Friends; as temperance and moderation is a virtue proceeding from true religion, and is of great benefit and advantage in many respects; we beseech all to be careful of their conduct and behaviour, “abstaining from every appearance of evil.”† And as an excess in drinking has been too prevalent among many of the inhabitants of these nations, we recommend to all Friends a watchful care over themselves, attended with a religious and prudent zeal against a practice so dishonourable and pernicious.

As to the elders among you, and such whom God having endued with knowledge and experience of the cleansing operations of his spirit, hath concerned to minister unto others, let them adorn the doctrine of the gospel, by shewing, out of a good conversation, their works with meekness of wisdom. Such as these, being clothed with humility, and exemplary to the flock, whom they feed, “not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of “a ready mind,”‡ are worthy of double honour, and to be highly esteemed in the church of Christ.

* 1 JOHN i. 6, 7.

† 1 THESS. v. 22.

‡ 1 PET. v. 2.

And you parents, guardians, masters, and all under whose care and tuition our youth are placed, we tenderly caution, and in love intreat you, that you be mindful faithfully to discharge the trust in you reposed; and that you would neither encourage nor permit the youth under your immediate direction and care, to take undue liberties in speech, behaviour, and apparel; but that you earnestly advise, and, as much as in you lies, prevent them from conforming to the changeable customs and fashions of the world, which are vain and empty. By such a timely care and concern, parents and guardians may keep themselves free from any just imputation of blame arising from the misconduct of those committed to their care, and from being accessory to the ruin which unwary youth too often incur through such means. Oh that our youth might be prevailed upon to humble themselves! endeavouring, through the divine assistance, to form their minds according to the plain and simple truths of the gospel contained in the Holy Scriptures, which we recommend as a proper mean of preserving them from the contagion of profane and irreligious books and writings, tending to alienate and divert men from the love of virtue, and the practice of true christian morality.

And as to you, our dearly beloved young Friends, we, in much affection and tenderness, exhort you, above all things, to give diligent heed and attention to the voice of the spirit of Christ speaking in the secret of your own consciences, reproving for evil, and speaking peace when you do well. For this, as it is closely and reverently regarded, will not only season your minds with an holy fear and dread of offending the great majesty of heaven and the whole earth, and thereby be a mean of preserving you from the vices, vanities and allurements of this world; but will also influence you to seek after, and pray earnestly for, that "wisdom which is from above, in whose right-hand " is length of days, and " in her left are riches and honour."* Happy are the youth who thus give up their names to serve the living God with full purpose of heart! How inexpressible are the blessings, which those, who are thus early devoted to serve the Lord, do bring upon themselves! And how do they cause the hearts of their parents and friends to overflow with joy and thanksgiving to the author of all our mercies, and the church of God to magnify his name, for the continuance of his goodness to his people from one generation to another! Whilst the ungodly and disobedient, and such as, contrary to the tender intreaties and admonitions of their parents, counsel of their friends, and dictates of the spirit of truth in their own hearts, give the reins to their unruly passions, and indulge themselves in riotting wantonness, and excess, too often wound

* PROV. iii. 16.

their parents with grief and affliction, become themselves a reproach to their christian profession, and render their own lives short and miserable, attended with such reflections as these, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!"* Oh that all such may return unto the Lord, whilst the day of his gracious visitation is extended unto them! who delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but willeth the salvation of all who unfeignedly repent, and return unto him.

And, dear Friends; whilst others are putting on the external marks of sorrow for the loss which this nation hath so lately sustained, let us, in humility and reverence of soul, approach the most high, and supplicate the continuance of his merciful regard and support to those who are most nearly affected by this dispensation of his providence. Thus shall we demonstrate the sincerity of our sorrow, and express our gratitude and duty in a manner becoming our holy profession; whilst a conformity in mere externals, not agreeable to our principles, and contrary to the practice of our worthy ancients, does but expose us to the observation and pity of wise and discerning men.

And, dear Friends; let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;" but exhorting one another to the great and necessary duty of publicly maintaining our religious assemblies, not only on the First-days, but on other days of the week, when appointed, in order to the worshipping of God, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth; and, when so met, we tenderly exhort and caution you to beware that your outward deportment be grave and serious, suitable to that holy awe, and religious reverence of soul, wherein we ought to approach the divine presence; and to wait in lowliness and humility of mind as at his footstool, ardently praying for the gift of his Holy Spirit, that we may experience the blessed influences thereof to mollify our hearts, and bring our spirits into subjection to his spirit; in which alone he is truly worshipped, through which only we have access to the throne of grace, and whereby alone our religious services and performances are rendered well-pleasing and acceptable in his sight.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory

* Prov. v. 12, 13.

“and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.
“Amen.”*

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN FRY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXV—1752.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the love of Christ, the foundation of church-communion, we tenderly salute you; earnestly desiring your growth and preservation in the truth, and your perseverance in every good word and work.

Blessed be the name of the Lord our God, the gracious visitations of whose heavenly love, yet continued unto us in these our annual assemblies, give us renewed occasions to celebrate his praise, and to say, with the psalmist, “How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”† Let us with one accord, in the depth of humility, approach his holy presence with thanksgiving, and with awful reverence worship at his footstool; who, though he “inhabiteh eternity, and dwelleth in the high and holy place,”‡ mercifully condescendeth to look down on the low estate of his church and people; “to comfort the mourners in Zion, to revive the spirits of the humble and of the contrite ones, and to beautify the meek with his salvation.”§

The Friends deputed from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, have brought to this meeting many comfortable accounts; by which it appears, that, in general, love and concord are maintained, and that Friends in divers places are under an earnest concern for the promotion of peace, and for the suppressing and guarding against every occasion of strife and discord, tending to divide and scatter the flock of Christ. For strengthening this concern, and promoting this christian disposition of love wheresoever it appears, we remind you of the benefits thereof, expressed in PSALM CXXXiii. viz. “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.” Be ye also mindful of the say-

* JUDE ver. 25. † PSAL. xxxvi. 7. ‡ ISAI. lvii. 15. § PSAL. cxlix. 4.

ing of our blessed Lord himself, JOHN xiii. 35. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

By the several epistles communicated unto us from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, for New-England, Long-Island, for New-York, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, and Barbadoes, as well as by the verbal account of our Friend Jonah Thompson, lately returned from his travels in the service of truth through several parts of America, we understand that the testimony of truth is gladly heard and received in many places; that some are effectually reached thereby, and enabled to join with us in a public profession of the same. May as many as have been, or shall be, gathered into the fold of Christ's church, continue obedient to his call, hearken to his voice and follow him! who goeth before his sheep and leadeth them into the green pastures of life, where he causeth them to rest and lie down in safety.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year from England and Wales, being principally for tithes and church-rates, so called, amount to two thousand seven hundred and seventeen pounds and upwards; and those from Ireland, to one thousand seven hundred and forty-three pounds and upwards. Two Friends who have been a long time prisoners, in consequence of excommunications from the ecclesiastical courts, still suffer under that oppression; from which we yet humbly hope, that a just and legal enlargement of true Protestant liberty, may, in the Lord's due time, extend to the perfecting our deliverance. There are also two other Friends prisoners for tithes, by processes against them in the court of Exchequer.

Dear Friends,

When we call to remembrance the fervent zeal, faith and constancy of our worthy elders and predecessors in the truth, who, through manifold sufferings, were enabled to bear a faithful testimony to the purity and spirituality of the gospel dispensation, an earnest desire is raised in us, that we, who succeed them in the same profession, may be excited to follow their example. In order whereunto, we recommend to every particular member of our society, a strict and serious self-examination, whether we are really concerned for the glory of God and the honour of his name? Are our hearts united unto him, and one unto another? Do we live answerably to the principles of our profession? Do we walk as becometh the followers of Christ? Do we not depart from the testimonies of truth, or the known doctrines of his gos-

pel, through fear of penalties enacted by human laws ? Do we in our conversation among men, live in the practice of christian humility and self denial ? “ Doth our light so shine before men, “ that others seeing our good works, may glorify our Father “ which is in heaven ? ” * Upon such an impartial enquiry into ourselves, let every particular of us “ hearken and hear what God “ the Lord will speak. For he will speak peace unto his people, “ and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly. ” † But if upon such a solemn search, any of us shall find that we have declined from the testimonies borne by our faithful predecessors ; that we have gone astray, and been too remiss in our conduct and conversation : that we have been too conformable to the customs and manners of the world, and have not walked according to the plainness and purity of our profession : let us humble ourselves before the Lord, and turn unto him with all our hearts, who is “ long-suffering and gracious, and delighteth in mercy ; “ who reconcileth the penitent, healeth their backslidings, is “ the repairer of breaches, and the restorer of paths to walk “ in. ” ‡ Such an holy care and watchfulness in every particular over himself, will be greatly conducive to a general love and unity, to the confirming and strengthening our church-fellowship and communion, and to the making us one another’s joy in the Lord.

And as, in our epistle of the last year, we were concerned to recommend to Monthly Meetings the appointment of solid and judicious Friends to visit the families of their brethren in christian love, and therein to inform, admonish, and advise, as occasion may be ; we again beseech you, let the tender advice of such as shall undertake so brotherly an office, meet with a kind and friendly reception ; that in the mutual giving and receiving of wholesome counsel and advice, you may co-operate to the help and furtherance of each other’s faith, the reviving of our ancient testimonies, and establishing the church on its first and fixed foundation.

And, dearly beloved Friends, as we become thus united to God, and one unto another, we shall experience the attracting power and force of Divine love, drawing and strongly inclining our hearts to a constant attendance at the appointed times and places for the public worship of God, who is love, “ and he that “ dwelleth in love, dwelleth in him. ” § This divine love induced our worthy elders to maintain their religious assemblies with an invincible constancy ; for they, following the call of Christ, their heavenly shepherd, resorted earnestly to those places of feeding,

* MAT. v. 16. † PSAL. lxxxv. 8. ‡ ISAI. lviii. 12. § 1 JOHN. iv. 16.

where he ministered food to the hungry, and waters of life to those who were a-thirst ; and filled with the consolations of his Spirit the souls of those who waited upon him in sincerity and truth. The same spiritual comforts and advantages are to this day measurably enjoyed by those, who with the like ardent desires, and earnest breathings of soul, are humbly waiting to receive them. Let us therefore, brethren, as many of us as have been remiss in this great and necessary duty of religiously assembling together, be excited to double our diligence for the time to come, and with an holy awe and reverence bow before the Lord, and draw near “ unto the throne of his grace, that we may obtain “ mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

And, dear Friends ; as to your conversation among men, that “ ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without “ rebuke,”† we recommend you to the light of Christ in your own hearts, and to the precepts of his Holy Spirit, delivered through the inspired penman of the Holy Scriptures. As you shall yield obedience to those divine and heavenly dictates, you will be made “ wise unto salvation,”‡ and perfectly instructed to discharge the duties of your several stations. By these you will be taught the rules of temperance and sobriety, and to “ let your moderation “ be known unto all men.”§ By these you will be directed “ to “ walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the “ time.”|| These will teach you, “ as much as in you lieth, to “ live peaceably with all men,”¶ These will instruct “ husbands “ to love their wives, and wives to reverence their husbands : pa- “ rents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition “ of the Lord, and children to obey their parents : masters to “ to give unto their servants that which is just and equal, and ser- “ vants to obey their masters, and count them worthy of all ho- “ nour : subjects to submit to principalities and powers ; and “ magistrates to be just, ruling in the fear of God.”** The same divine instruction will direct you as church members : “ The “ elders to feed the flock, taking the oversight thereof ; not by “ constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready “ mind. Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being “ ensamples to the flock : and the younger to submit themselves “ unto the elder ; yea, all of you to be subject one to another, “ and be clothed with humility.”††

* HEB. iv. 16. † PHIL. ii. 15. ‡ 2 TIM. iii. 15. § PHIL. iv. 5.
 || COL. iv. 5. ¶ ROM. xiii. 13. ** EPH. v. 33. EPH. vi. 1. 4. COL. iv. 1.
 1. TIM. vi. 1. TIT, iii. 1. 2 SAM. xxiii. †† 1 PET. v. 2. 5.

And, dear Friends ; we think it highly necessary to renew with earnestness the former advices of this meeting, that all Friends do with the utmost care guard against a practice of tale-bearing and private slander against persons and families, as being contrary to the spirit of christianity, and highly dishonourable among men.

We also think proper at this time to revive the exhortation given in our Yearly Meeting epistle of 1727, viz.

“ We earnestly desire all Friends to be very careful not to run into larger trading and business than their capacities and abilities can well answer. And if, through adverse accidents, any should fail in paying their just debts, and should, after his or her composition with his or her creditors, be so far blessed and prospered in their affairs, as to be capable of paying their deficiencies ; it is the earnest desire and advice of this meeting, that they do not omit the same ; but that they discharge a good conscience therein ; the obligations of which are of equal force, whether enjoined by human laws or not.”

Finally, brethren ; let us “ be all of one mind, having compassion one of another : love as brethren ; be pitiful, be courteous.”* Labour most affectionately to recover and restore all such as have erred and gone astray, that they may now return unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.” And let us all, with humble and grateful hearts, unite in offering up a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord our God, To whom, for the multitude of his mercies, and plenteous redemption in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, through the guidance and influence of his Holy Spirit, be glory and honour, dominion and praise ascribed, now and for ever. Amen.

Signed in, and on behalf of the Yearly-Meeting, by

WILLIAM FOWLER,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXVI—1953.

Dearly Beloved Friends and Brethren,

Under a renewed sense and comfortable experience of the gracious and refreshing influences of that divine and heavenly principle of light and life, wherein the members of the true church or body of Christ, however dispersed here on earth, stand joined

* 1 PETER, iii, 8,

and cemented in the unity of the Spirit, through faith and obedience unto him, their holy head, guide, and leader into all truth, we most tenderly and affectionately salute you.

It behoveth us, in the depth of humility and reverence, to consider and remind one another of the merciful dealings of the Lord our God, who, in the aboundings of his grace, hath called us out of this present evil world, to bear among the children of men a public profession of our faith in, and subjection to, the light and spirit of his Son, our Saviour, inwardly revealed. An holy and honourable calling ! Let us, we beseech you, brethren, walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called : "As obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance ; but, as he that hath called us is holy, so let us be holy in all manner of conversation."*

The various affairs and concerns of the churches, which have been laid before this our assembly, have been considered and concluded in a spirit of brotherly love and christian condescension ; in the exercise whereof, through the prevailing power and efficacy of pure love, every thing centres in an agreeable calmness, and serenity.

By accounts brought from the several Quarterly Meetings in England ; and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, for New-England, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, New-York, Virginia, Maryland, North-Carolina, and Tortola, we understand, that there is, in many places, an openness to hear the testimony of truth, and that many are convinced of our principles, so as to join with us in the public profession of the same. Our earnest desire and necessary caution is that we may conduct ourselves with the utmost care and circumspection, that no offence or occasion of stumbling be given to religious inquirers, but that our "light may so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."†

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in this year from England and Wales, being principally for tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand and thirty pounds, and upwards ; and those from Ireland, one thousand five hundred and ninety-one pounds and upwards. The two friends formerly mentioned, who have been long imprisoned on excommunications, still remain sufferers under the oppression of the ecclesiastical courts ; from the unnecessary severity of which, many faithful subjects of the Protestant government continue to hope for deliverance. There are also two other Friends in prison, where they have been near four years, by Exchequer process for tithes ; against which

* 1 PETER, i. 14, 15.

† MATTHEW, v. 16.

Antichristian yoke of bondage we earnestly advise you to stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and to maintain your testimony, in this respect, with that fortitude and meekness which ever accompany and support faithful and conscientious sufferers in such a righteous and christian cause.

Dear Friends,

It is matter of exceeding grief and concern to many of the faithful among us, to observe how far that exemplary plainness of habit, speech, and deportment, which distinguished our forefathers, and for which they patiently underwent the reproach and contradiction of sinners, are now departed from by too many under our name, and who frequent our religious assemblies. A declension from the simplicity of truth herein hath been, and we fear is, attended with pernicious consequences, in opening the way of some, the more easily and unobserved, to attend the places of public resort for the exercise of sports, plays, and other hurtful and destructive diversions of the age, from which truth taught our faithful elders, and still teaches us, wholly to refrain. And indeed the christian gravity of their lives and actions always carried with it a severe reproof and manifest opposition to the wantonness and levity of such dangerous and sinful pastimes. Wherefore we beseech you, be not deceived nor led aside by false notions of imaginary pleasures, "to partake of the unfruitful works of darkness; but watch and be sober; and, as becometh children of the light and of the day, abstain from all appearance of evil."*

It is with a degree of comfort and satisfaction that we observe in divers places a commendable zeal and fervency in some, to cleanse the church from pollutions; to restore the discipline thereof where decayed or disused; to assist and bring back the scattered and dispersed of the flock; and to recover those who have gone astray, and declined from the testimony of truth and footsteps of the faithful; of which declension too many instances appear among us. We cannot but earnestly desire, that the truly concerned in a work of so great importance, may meet with a reception answerable to the charity of their endeavours therein. Wherefore we intreat Friends, in their several and respective Monthly Meetings, to assist and encourage such of their members as they apprehend to be rightly concerned in, and gifted and qualified for, so useful and eminent a service.

And, dear Friends; although the labours of such as are called forth by the spirit of Christ, and instructed thereby rightly to divide the word of truth, are highly serviceable to the church, and

the feet of those who publish the glad tidings of salvation exceeding beautiful ; yet the aim and design of every true gospel minister, is to direct the minds of all to the divine teachings of the Holy Spirit, and to wait upon, and have their whole trust and expectation on the Lord alone. And as the religious strength and communion both of preachers and hearers, consisteth in their united dependence on the power and spirit of Christ, their guide and leader : so where any part of that dependence is broken off from him, the holy head, and placed on any instrument or member of the body, it hath been sometimes experienced to become a weight or burden on such instrument, and a real impediment to its present service. Wherefore, brethren, we beseech you, that, in all your assemblies for the worship of God, your eye be single unto him, your expectation fixed on him alone, and your faith standing in his power and spirit, that you may grow and be established therein, and may be made one another's strength in the Lord.

We also esteem it our duty to remind Friends every where, that they be careful and exact in performing their contracts, words, and promises; that so the reputation and credit of our society, which our worthy elders obtained amongst men, by their care and circumspection in those respects, may be continued. To which end we advise you, as we have often done, to avoid an inordinate pursuit after riches, and not to launch into trade or business above your abilities, so as to subject the honour of your religious profession to the uncertainty of worldly contingencies : but be ye frugal and industrious, ever mindful of the observation of the apostle, that "godliness with contentment is great gain : and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." Strictly regarding the advice of the beloved disciple, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."† Which he enforces by this remark, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

And as it behoveth us, as obedient subjects, religiously to observe the close connection of those excellent precepts, "fear God, honour the king ;"‡ so let us be mindful not to defraud the king of any of his customs, duties, or excise, nor to deal in goods suspected to be run ; nor in anywise to be concerned, for private gain, in any manner of trade prohibited by law.

And let us in an especial manner beware, lest any of us, under the present blessings of outward ease and liberty in religion, be found using that liberty for a cloak of licentiousness, and, instead of serving God, serve ourselves, and our own vicious inclinations. It were certainly a most lamentable abuse of the goodness of God, thus to pervert his mercies to the corruption of our man-

* 1 TIM. vi. 6.

† 1 JOHN ii. 15.

‡ 1 PET. ii. 17.

ners : let us therefore earnestly watch and pray that we may always be preserved from such ingratitude.

And, dear brethren : as many of you as are parents of children, and have experienced the work of truth in yourselves, cannot but have strong and ardent desires for the welfare of your offspring; not only that they may inherit your temporal estates, and outward enjoyments, but above all, that they may come, with you, to be made partakers of the word of life, and the glorious hope of a blessed immortality : in order whereunto our advice is, that you be careful to bring them up in the practice of a diligent and constant attendance of religious meetings, instructing them to wait upon God when there, for the guidance and influence of his Holy Spirit, the only unerring teacher and leader into all truth. We also recommend unto you the practice of retiring to wait upon the Lord in and with your own families ; wherein, as your minds are rightly exercised, you may find yourselves qualified to administer such advice and counsel to them, as may conduce to the building up, and establishing them in the most holy faith, which working by love, purifieth the heart, and cleanseth from all unrighteousness. We also tenderly advise you to bring up your children and families in the frequent reading of the Holy scriptures ; and to use your utmost endeavours to prevent their having and reading such books as tend to profaneness and irreligion, and to alienate their minds from the love of God, and obedience to his requirings.

Finally, brethren, farewell. "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Dwell in love, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." To whom, for the multitude of his mercies vouchsafed to his church and people, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be all glory, honour, praise, and thanksgiving rendered and ascribed, now, henceforth, and for ever. Amen.

Signed in, and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by
WILLIAM DILLWORTH,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXVII—1754.

Dearly Beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and under a renewed sense of the continuance of the presence of the Lord our God, the alone giver of life, and the strength, support, and

stability of his church and people, we tenderly salute you ; earnestly exhorting, that in all our religious assemblies appointed for the worship of God, who is a spirit, our approaches before him may be in the depth of humility, and with an awful reverence of soul, having our entire dependence and expectation on him, and on the influences of his Holy Spirit, the comforter, fountain, and well-spring of all spiritual consolation, and the preparer and qualifier of his people to receive the same, by subjecting their spirits to the obedience of Christ ; enabling them, through the assistance of divine grace, to purge themselves “ from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* Wherefore, brethren, let every individual of us, who make profession of the blessed truth, above all things beware that “ we have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness ;”† knowing assuredly that the Holy Spirit of discipline abhors all manner of wickedness and impurity, and will not “ abide when unrighteousness cometh in, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin.”‡ Let the spirit of Christ bear rule in your hearts, and your lives and conversations will be regulated thereby, to the praise and glory of his name, who is worthy for ever. Amen.

Thus the real and substantial enjoyment of peace increasing in proportion to your progress in obedience, your assemblies for the worship of Almighty God will become your chiefest joy ; and your own taste and experience of the consolations therein received, will attract you to those places of spiritual feeding and refreshment, with an earnestness of desire, even superior to that of a natural man, when, being hungry, he resorts to the place of receiving his daily bread. As you attain this excellent disposition of mind, you will rather come before than after the appointed time of assembling, and render the repetition of the wholesome advices, often given on that account, less necessary in time to come.

And, dear Friends ; it is with much comfort and satisfaction we have to acquaint you, that in the course of considering and determining a variety of weighty affairs laid before this meeting, the whole hath been conducted in that spirit of love, meekness, and condescension, which should ever preside over all the members of the true church of Christ, among whom contention, envy, strife, wrath, and discord, ought not to exist.

By the accounts we have received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Briton,

* 2 COR. vii. 1.

† EPHES. v. 11.

‡ WISD. i. 4, 5.

Holland, Rhode-Island, and New-England, Long-Island for New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, South-Carolina, Barbadoes, and Tortola, we are informed of the state of our Friends in general; and that many people have an ear open to hear the testimony of truth. Whence we have ground to hope, that the seed sown in many places, may, in some of them, produce fruit, to the praise of him who is the Lord of the harvest; and who, according to his good pleasure, sendeth forth labourers into his vineyard, and whose blessing alone can give the increase. Some conviction hath also appeared since last year.

The accounts of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, from England and Wales, amount to two thousand nine hundred ninety-seven pounds, and upwards; and from Ireland, fifteen hundred pounds, and upwards; being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates; against both which faithful Friends were, and still are, concerned to maintain their christian testimony. And it is with much grief we observe the manifest declension of too many, professing among us, from the testimony of our ancients against that Antichristian yoke of tithes: wherefore a concern hath been upon Friends to re-print and disperse a new edition of a book, entitled, "The Great Case of Tithes," formerly written by Anthony Pearson; to which are also annexed several other substantial reasons and arguments against the payment of them, tending to enlighten the judgments, and to regulate the sentiments of those, who, either through misunderstanding, or want of better information, may have been turned aside, or misled in this respect: which book we desire may be spread among Friends through your several Monthly Meetings, for the general use and service of your respective members. And, dear Friends, if any shall yet persist in a practice contrary to our known testimony, or forsake the assembling themselves together, for the worship of God, we apprehend such are not properly qualified to be employed by you in the service of the church, nor fit instruments for the carrying on the concerns thereof.

Of the four persons, whom we mentioned in the last year's epistle to have been then prisoners, one, who had long lain under sentence of excommunication, is since discharged. And we have no account of any Friend committed to prison, since last year.

And, dear Friends; when we observe the undue liberties and disorderly practices of too many under our profession, and especially of the younger sort of people, we can do no less than caution all parents and heads of families, who have themselves in any measure experienced the cleansing virtue of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, to purify their own

hearts, and preserve them from the evils which abound among mankind ; to be peculiarly careful of their own conduct, that they may, by example as well as precept, excite and encourage their children and families to walk in the ways of truth and holiness, and to follow them as they follow Christ ; that they be frequently concerned to seek the Lord on behalf of their offspring and families, that they may come to know the God of their fathers to be their God, and be enabled to continue stedfast in their testimony for him, become instrumental in his hand to celebrate the praises of his holy name, and to magnify and exalt the power and efficacy of his truth from one generation to another.

And, dear Friends ; we tenderly exhort and beseech you, that you look well to your own selves, and watch over your own spirits, lest any of you lose that sense of life which you have formerly witnessed, and become slack and remiss in performing the duties you owe to your children and families, of frequently calling them together, and waiting upon God with them, that you may know your spirits tendered, and engaged in love to administer unto them proper advices respecting their duties to God, to you, one towards another, and to the world in general. As this holy care shall rest upon you, your lives and conversations will shine before men, and your sobriety, justice, moderation, and integrity will effectually recommend the testimonies you are called to maintain.

We further find ourselves, dearly beloved brethren, earnestly concerned to remind you of another token of degeneracy too visible among us ; viz. A negligence of attending our appointed meetings for worship, both on the First-day and other days of the week. A neglect which calls for seasonable reproof, and a pressing exhortation, that a religious concern of attending all your meetings, and especially of your Week-day meetings, may grow, increase, and become more general. This we recommend as the proper means of renewing your strength, and as suitable opportunities of abstracting your thoughts from the hurries and incumbrances of worldly affairs, and of habituating your minds to a serious meditation on heavenly things. And, dear Friends, let not the smallness of your numbers discourage you from constantly attending those meetings, inasmuch as the words of Christ remain unchangeably true and stedfast, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." MATT. xviii. 20. And as your affections come to be set on things that are above, your delight will be in frequent retirement from the world, its trade and concerns, and your chiefest care will be to lay up treasure in heaven secure from the reach of corruption and disappointment ; and then, where your treasure

is, there will your hearts be also. But, on the contrary, it hath been justly observed, that where remissness and neglect of attending meetings of worship hath prevailed, it hath been too often an inlet to further declension, and an introducer to such other undue liberties as truth and its guidance do by no means admit of.

And further, brethren, we caution you against resorting to places of public diversions, unnecessary frequenting of taverns and alehouses, and mixing yourselves in such company and conversation, as hath a manifest tendency to corrupt your hearts, and draw them aside from that steady and religious concern, and reverent awe, which continually dwells upon the minds of true christians. We also especially warn you to beware of the too frequent use of spirituous liquors, and intemperance of every kind : but let your behaviour and conduct in all respects be such, as that " your moderation may be known unto all men."*

And, dear Friends ; abide in humility ; let neither the apparel of your persons, nor the furniture of your houses, carry with them any appearance of contradiction to the plainness of your profession ; but let such of you as are blessed with the affluence of outward things, freely and liberally administer of your abundance to the relief and assistance of your brethren who stand in need, that you may be " rich in good works," discharge your stewardship with fidelity, and " lay up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come." 1. TIM. vi. 18, 19.

But, we beseech you brethren, stand upon your guard against the love of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches ; the nature of which is to choke the good seed, and to render men unfruitful. An eager pursuit after the grandeur of this world, is a certain token of earthly mindedness ; and those who mind earthly things, are represented by the Apostle Paul as " enemies of the cross of Christ." The beloved disciple of our Lord also expressly assures us, that " if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 JOHN ii. 15. A resolution to be rich, hath destroyed many. " They that WILL be rich," saith the apostle, " fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil ; which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 TIM. vi. 9, 10. This hath been verified in the ruinous consequences of an earthly, ambitious spirit, pushing men forward, in the pursuit of greatness, upon hazardous attempts, which have too often issued in the fall and ruin of themselves and families, the reproach of the

* PHIL. iv, 5.

society, and great loss to others. Some of them, probably, have placed more confidence in them for the sake of their profession of self-denial, which, had they really practised, would have prevented the fatal effects of their covetous and ambitious undertakings. Wherefore, we entreat Friends, in their Monthly Meetings every where, to be properly watchful one over another, and early to caution all against running beyond their depth, and entangling themselves in a greater multiplicity of trade and business than they can extricate themselves from with honour and reputation. And where any shall proceed in opposition to such advice and counsel of their brethren, let them in due time be dealt with according to former advices of this meeting.

And dear brethren; as the accounts ye yearly receive of the removal hence of many of our faithful Friends are fresh memorials to us, that the time of our pilgrimage in this world is also of a short continuance, and very uncertain, it behoveth us to "pass the time of our sojourning here with fear;"* for to every one of us the saying of the apostle is justly applicable. "The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."† Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and in a deep and lowly sense of our own frailties and infirmities, ever retain in remembrance that "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever."‡

Now unto the Lord, our God, for the continuance of his gracious visitation unto us, his poor, weak, and unworthy creatures, let us, in a deep and reverent sense of his unspeakable mercy and goodness, unite with humble and grateful hearts in ascribing glory, thanksgiving, and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

In brotherly love we again tenderly salute you, and heartily bid you farewell.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly-Meeting, by

JEREMIAH WARING,

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

* 1 PET. i. 17.

† 1 PET. iv. 7.

‡ 1 PET. i. 24, 25.

EPISTLE LXXVIII—1755.

Dear and well beloved Friends and Brethren,

We greet you in christian love, the bond of church-communication, wherein every living member of the body or church of Christ stands united unto him, its holy head, and hath fellowship with him, and one with another. Which fellowship, or church-communication, is excellently represented by the apostle Paul, under the similitude of a natural body, when he says, "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." ROM. xii. 4, 5.

Wherefore, brethren, we beseech you as members of one body, "let brotherly love continue;" and in the exercise thereof, without dissimulation, let every one, according to the gift given him of God, and the proportion of faith received, be found in his proper office in the church of Christ, following after "the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." ROM. xiv. 19.

Thus abiding in love, and coming up in our several places and stations, we may be made instrumental in the hand of God for the propagation of his truth on the earth, and, by an exemplary life and conversation, may manifest ourselves to be, in deed and in truth, "the children of light, and the children of the day." In order whereunto, we recommend you to a state of continual watchfulness.

Let us, we earnestly intreat you, brethren, under the present circumstances of outward ease and liberty in matters of religion, which God in his mercy hath influenced the king and parliament to continue to these nations, beware of indulging ourselves, and of sitting down at rest, or falling asleep, in a state of indolence and carnal security. But let us rather consider this day of outward freedom and tranquility as a day of imminent danger, wherein our adversary the devil, restrained from "devouring as a roaring lion," is incessantly exercising his wiles and subtilty as a serpent to beguile and seduce us into a lukewarm and indifferent condition in matters of religion, and a supineness and negligence in that great and most important concern of our soul's salvation.

The numerous snares of this subtle enemy being adapted to every age and circumstance of human life, make it every man's indispensable duty to be always upon his guard: let us therefore continually keep in mind the precept of our Saviour; "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." MATT. xxvi. 41.

In this dangerous state of temptation, we exhort you, brethren, above all things, to give attention to, and have your dependence on, the spirit of Christ, the word of divine wisdom, the universal teacher, the only searcher of every secret thought, and discernor of the intents of the heart.

As you come up in faithful obedience to the requirings of this inward and immediate teacher in yourselves, you cannot fail of having a due regard to the exhortations and advices of those whom the same spirit shall excite in love to minister unto you. Such as these you will have in esteem, and regard as co-workers with that universal grace and good spirit of God; to the secret dictates of which in your own hearts, you experience their testimonies to be correspondent.

And, dear brethren; as at other times, so now again, in much affection we exhort you often to retire inwardly, in great humility of mind, and self-abasement, to the Lord our God, the Father and fountain of all our mercies, who gives strength to his poor depending children, that have no power nor might of their own.

And, dear Friends; be mindful to attend your religious meetings at the times appointed, and labour diligently to have your minds gathered to the gift of divine grace in your own hearts, that so you may witness a profiting by your coming together. Wherefore assemble yourselves in fear, and hold your meetings in an awful, humble, and reverent frame of spirit, considering yourselves as under the inspection of his all-seeing eye, who penetrates into the inmost recesses of men's hearts, and from whom nothing can be hid.

Thus shall the offerings of broken hearts and contrite spirits, in your solemn assemblies, ascend as sweet incense, acceptable to the Lord who continueth to show of his salvation to all such as are devoted in soul to follow him faithfully in his holy requirings. But, brethren, let us beware, lest, like the ungrateful and degenerate Jews of old, our offerings through disobedience and insincerity, become unsavory, and rejected of him, who is of "purer eyes than to behold evil," and who cannot look on iniquity with approbation.

And, dear Friends; as such a solid concern and reverent awe shall prevail upon and influence your spirits in religious meetings, you will experience the meditations of your hearts so far exercised, and fixed on things of a spiritual nature, as that on your departure thence, you will not be easily, nor presently drawn aside into any conversation about earthly and temporal affairs; which, to a soul thus rightly concerned and influenced, will, at such a time, comparatively, appear altogether trifling and insignificant.

Moreover, brethren ; we beseech you, in your ordinary conversation among men, let your words be few and savoury, and observe the precept of the Apostle, " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth ;" so may your good example, and the gravity and circumspection of your conduct and behaviour, minister matter of just rebuke to those who know not a bridle to their tongues, and who seem not sufficiently aware, that, " in the multitude of words, their wanteth not sin." **PROV. x. 19.**

And the youth amongst us, we, in tender love, exhort to bear the yoke of Christ, and submit to his cross ; by which they may come to witness a " crucifying of the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof ;" and may experience through the effectual operations of his spirit, the blood of Christ, to " purge their conscience from dead works to serve the living God." **HEB. ix. 14.**

And, dearly beloved ; we earnestly entreat such of you as are parents, weightily to consider the importance of the charge committed to your trust, respecting your offspring ; and that it is your incumbent duty to exert your utmost endeavours to bring them up in the " nurture and admonition of the Lord." **EPHES. iv. 4.** Your first and principal care in regard to them, should be to instill into their tender minds the remembrance of their Creator in the days of their youth, in order whereto it behoveth you with all earnestness of affection, early to instruct them, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ;" and to impart unto them such christian experiences as you have had of the gracious dealings of the Lord towards you, in the course of your pilgrimage through the troubles and afflictions of this short and uncertain life ; and that it is the blessing of God alone which maketh truly rich, and adds no sorrow with it." **PROV. x. 22.**

This religious method of education was prescribed by Moses, the man of God, to the people of Israel, when he said, **DEUT. vi. 6, 7.** " These words which I command thee, this day shall be " in thine heart ; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy " children and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, " and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, " and when thou risest up."

And, dear Friends ; let those amongst you who have substance in this world, endeavour, while in health, to dispose thereof, and settle it in such a manner as may best prevent strife, contentions, or law-suits, after their decease. And let your bequest of outward riches to your posterity be accompanied with a due regard to

that necessary apostolick caution, "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches; but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy." 1 TIM. vi. 17.

But, brethren; "Beware of covetousness, which is idolatry." COL. iii. 5. An eager desire after riches hath ruined many, by pushing them in the pursuit thereof upon dangerous attempts, which, when successful, bring at most but an earthly, fading, transitory, and corruptible enjoyment; but when unsuccessful, have been attended with the utter loss and ruin of many persons and their families; the numerous instances of which, have been matter of exceeding grief and sorrow of heart to the truly religious and conscientious among us.

And we likewise find a renewed concern upon our minds to warn you, who have run into the corrupt customs and vain fashions of the world, in speech, habit, behaviour, or furniture, to consider how inconsistent they are with the teachings of that holy principle wherewith you have been visited, as well as directly opposite to the teachings and conduct of those, whom divine goodness was pleased to make instrumental to turn many of our ancestors out of the practice of these things, into a life and behaviour agreeable to the doctrine and example of a crucified Saviour. Which plainness and self-denial is yet consistent with the religious principles of our society, and is often found to be the concern of the true and faithful ministers of this day to call to the observation of, though too much overlooked and slighted by many.

And you who are parents, or masters, be diligent in frequently reading the Holy Scriptures, advising and exhorting your children and servants to the same: and carefully keep them from reading corrupt and unprofitable books, which tend to alienate the mind from true religion, and from that humble and attentive waiting upon the principle of life and virtue, by which alone they can be established.

Moreover, brethren; we think it needful to remind you of standing fast in your ancient and christian testimony against the payment of tithes, and all other methods of contributing to the support of an hireling ministry, lest we be found in the practice of upholding those things which the testimony of truth led our worthy ancients through manifold sufferings to oppose.

The accounts of Friends' sufferings brought in this year from England and Wales, amount to two thousand nine hundred and seventy-five pounds, and upwards; and those from Ireland, to fifteen hundred and ninety pounds, and upwards; making toge-

ther above the sum of four thousand five hundred and sixty-five pounds; which are mostly for tithes, and those called church-rates. It doth not appear that any Friend hath been committed to prison for his testimony since last year; nor are any of those, who were then under confinement, yet discharged.

By accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, Long-Island for New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, North and South-Carolina, we are informed of the welfare of Friends in general; and that there is an openness yet subsisting among many others for hearing the testimony of truth declared; from whence such of our Friends in the ministry as shall find a necessity upon them of visiting those places, have reasonable ground of hope that their labours therein may have some degree of service and success.

We have great cause to be bowed in deep humility and gratitude to the Lord our God, the great master of all our religious assemblies, for the continuance of his unspeakable mercy and goodness to us, in that he hath, in a very eminent manner, overshadowed this our annual meeting with his life-giving presence and power, wherein the great name of our God hath been adored, and the weighty affairs of the church transacted in a spirit of true brotherly love and condescension.

Finally, brethren, "Live in love, and the God of love and peace shall be with you;" for, as the beloved disciple of our Lord assures us, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God."* To which only secure habitation of the church and people of God we recommend you; ascribing to him, the Father of all our mercies, for his manifold blessings and favours, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereof he alone is worthy, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN GURNEY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXIX—1756.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In a reverent and thankful sense of the enjoyment of the love of God, which ever abideth with his church and people, uniting them to Christ, their “head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God,”* we most tenderly and affectionately salute you; with earnest desires and supplications to the God and Father of all our mercies, that we may be preserved in integrity of faith, and dependence on him alone, who is a never-failing protector of those who put their trust in him; a present help in every time of trouble; and an assured safeguard unto all who place their only hope of refuge under the covert of his wing.

Blessed be the name of the Lord our God, who, in this our annual assembly, hath mercifully vouchsafed to favour us with a participation of that peace, which our blessed Lord and Saviour not only gave for the consolation of his mournful disciples before his leaving the world; but wherewith, according to his promise, he continueth even to this day, by his Holy Spirit, to refresh and comfort the panting souls of the weary and heavy-laden; to support the spirits of the meek and lowly in heart, under the pressures and afflictions wherewith he is pleased to prove their faith and patience, in their passage through this vale of tears; to conduct them safely through the dangers, snares, and temptations of this present evil world; to enable them to live to the praise of the glory of his grace, while here; and, in the end, to receive them into his heavenly kingdom of everlasting rest and peace hereafter.

By accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Virginia, Rhode-Island for New-England, North-Carolina, Pennsylvania, New-York, Amsterdam, and Tortola; and by the verbal relation of a Friend lately returned from his religious visit to America, we have comfortable accounts of an openness continuing in many places, to hear the testimony of truth declared; which gives a reasonable ground of encouragement for such as are concerned to travel in the work of the ministry, to be faithful therein; and to hope, that, in due time, their labours may be crowned with success.

The amount of Friends’ sufferings brought in this year from

* COL. OS. ii. 19.

England and Wales, is two thousand seven hundred and sixty-six pounds, and upwards; and of those brought in from Ireland, one thousand three hundred and eighty-seven pounds, and upwards; making together four thousand one hundred and fifty-three pounds, and upwards; being principally for non-payment of tithes, and those called church-rates. The two Friends who were prisoners last year have been since discharged.

And, dear Friends; as we understand, that in some places Friends are remiss in bringing in the accounts of their sufferings for tithes, and have reason to believe, that, in others, some unfaithfulness doth appear, in regard to the maintaining our ancient testimony against that Antichristian yoke; we earnestly beseech and exhort those who are deficient in this important point, seriously to consider the doctrine of the New Testament herein, and how contrary a forced maintenance is to the nature of the gospel dispensation, and to the express precept of our Saviour, "Freely ye have received, freely give."*

And, dearly beloved; as the voice of the righteous judgments of God is an awakening voice, and as the prophet hath declared, that, "when his judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;"† let every one be thoroughly awakened to a deep and weighty consideration of their ways, and be seriously exercised in self-examination; and, to assist in so necessary a work, we earnestly recommend the advices given in our epistle of the year 1752. viz.

Dear Friends,

When we call to remembrance the fervent zeal, faith, and constancy of our worthy elders and predecessors in the truth, who, through manifold sufferings, were enabled to bear a faithful testimony to the purity and spirituality of the gospel dispensation, an earnest desire is raised in us, that we who succeed them in the same profession, may be excited to follow their example: in order whereunto, we recommend to every particular member of our society a strict and serious self-examination, whether we are really concerned for the glory of God, and the honour of his name? Are our hearts united unto him, and one unto another? Do we live answerable to the principles of our profession? Do we walk as becometh the followers of Christ? Do we not depart from the testimonies of truth, or the known doctrines of his gospel, through fear of penalties enacted by human laws? Do we, in our conversation among men, live in the practice of christian humility and self-denial? Doth our light so shine before men, that others, seeing our

* MATT. X. 8.

† ISAI. XXVI. 9.

“good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven?”
 ‘ Upon such an impartial enquiry into ourselves, let every parti-
 ‘ cular of us hearken and “hear what God the Lord will speak;
 ‘ for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but
 ‘ let them not turn again to folly.” ‘ But if, upon such a solemn
 ‘ search, any of us shall find that we have declined from the tes-
 ‘ timonies borne by our faithful predecessors; that we have gone
 ‘ astray, and been too remiss in our conduct and conversation;
 ‘ that we have been too conformable to the customs and man-
 ‘ ners of the world, and have not walked according to the plain-
 ‘ ness and purity of our profession; let us humble ourselves be-
 ‘ fore the Lord, and turn unto him with all our hearts, who is
 ‘ long-suffering and gracious, and delighteth in mercy; who re-
 ‘ concileth the penitent, healeth their backslidings, is “the re-
 ‘ pairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to walk in.”
 ‘ Such an holy care and watchfulness in every particular over
 ‘ himself, will be greatly conducive to a general love and unity,
 ‘ to the confirming and strengthening our church-fellowship
 ‘ and communion, and to the making us one another’s joy in the
 ‘ Lord.’

And, dear Friends; as our worthy elders clearly saw that gos-
 pel worship could not be limited to any set forms or times of
 man’s appointment; nor was their “fear toward God taught by
 “the precept of men,” so were they conscientiously concerned
 in a religious dissent from formal, ceremonious, and customary
 injunctions of that kind. A deviation from their example is cause
 of grief, as it seems plain unto us, that the practice of our elders
 was agreeable to the doctrine of the gospel, and to the practice
 and precepts of Christ and his apostles. Wherefore we beseech
 you, brethren, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith with-
 “out wavering; * for,” saith the apostle, “he that wavereth, is
 “like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.” † But
 let us, who “are made partakers of Christ, hold the beginning of
 “our confidence stedfast unto the end.” ‡

Let us, we earnestly beseech you, brethren, constantly dwell
 under a truly conscientious and religious concern, that, in all our
 dealings among men, we be strictly just and honest, and that
 the whole course of our conduct and conversation in this world
 may demonstrate, that we are in deed and in truth the sincere
 and humble followers and disciples of our Lord and Master Jesus
 Christ, “who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we
 “should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found
 “in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again:
 “when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to

* HEB. x. 23.

† JAMES i. 6.

‡ HEB. iii. 14.

“him who judgeth righteously.”* By thus following the great example of our Lord, in justice, meekness, and patience, we may most effectually demonstrate that “we are in him;” and, saith the apostle John, “He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”†

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind: be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ: as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but, as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.”‡

As we profess to be of the flock of Christ, who saith, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;”§ let us, therefore, by hearing his voice, and following his call, manifest to others the truth and sincerity of our profession; and that he is indeed our shepherd, who hath called us unto glory and virtue: he hath called us to deny ourselves; “to take up our cross, and follow him.”|| He teacheth us, that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

In order whereunto, we recommend you, with ourselves, to the leading and direction of his grace and good spirit, which he hath given to “guide you into all truth.”¶

Blessed be his holy name, who, under the gracious guidance of his heavenly spirit, hath enabled us to hold this our annual assembly in peace and tranquility, and hath not suffered the evil spirit of strife, contention, and discord to have any admission or entrance thereinto.

We conclude this epistle with the words of the apostle: “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”** “To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN FRY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

* 1 PET. ii. 21, 22, 23. † 1 JOHN. ii. 6. ‡ 1 PET. i. 13, 14, 15.
§ JOHN x. 27. || TITUS ii. 12. ¶ JOHN xiv. 13. ** 1 PET. v. 10, 11.

EPISTLE LXXX—1757.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the fellowship of the gospel of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we most tenderly and affectionately salute you; desiring that grace, mercy, and peace may be multiplied amongst the churches of Christ every where, to their mutual comfort and edification.

It is with humble and thankful hearts that we acknowledge the gracious regard of the Lord our God continued to his church and people, of which he has been mercifully pleased to give evident tokens in the course of this our solemn meeting, and whereby we have been enabled to transact the weighty affairs thereof in much brotherly love and condescension.

By accounts brought in from the several Quarterly Meetings, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, Long-Island for New-York, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina, and Tortola; as also by the verbal account of a Friend lately returned from a religious visit to the churches in America, we have received many comfortable relations of the prosperity of truth, through the renewal of our heavenly Father's visitation, drawing the spirits of his people, of the rising generation especially, into an holy conformity to his blessed will. Some instances of convincement have lately appeared, and a disposition seems to prevail amongst persons of various professions in religion to hear the testimony of truth declared.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year from England and Wales, amount to two thousand nine hundred and ninety-three pounds and upwards; and those from Ireland, to one thousand seven hundred and ten pounds, and upwards; being mostly for tithes and church rates, so called. We tenderly remind the present generation with what holy zeal and steady resolution our ancient brethren, in order that they might preserve a conscience void of offence towards God, maintained a faithful testimony, even to the loss of their lives, against Antichristian impositions.

We observe, with great satisfaction, from the accounts received, that Friends are generally careful not to defraud the king in any branch of his revenues, nor to deal in goods clandestinely imported. We most earnestly exhort the same care may be continued with the utmost diligence, and that Friends keep clear of purchasing any such goods, either for sale, or private use, from motives of gratitude to the government, and justice to our fel-

low subjects. For though we cannot, for conscience sake, actively comply with some things enjoined by human laws; yet the principles we profess, as well as the Holy Scriptures, require that we should "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," and be punctual in the payment of every tribute which we can justly do, without acting in opposition to that sacred illumination bestowed upon us by the Father of lights not only to teach, but also to enable us to perform every duty with uprightness and integrity, both to God, and to those who, in the course of his providence, are placed in authority.

It having been weightily under the consideration of this meeting to discourage all under our profession from that great inconsistency of being concerned in privateers, letters of marque, or ships armed in a warlike manner, we think it necessary very earnestly to recommend to all Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, to keep a watchful eye over their members in this important branch of our christian testimony; and where any inclination towards such practices appears, that timely admonition and suitable counsel be given, in the spirit of love and meekness.

And, dear Friends; as it hath pleased the Almighty to reveal unto mankind his Son Jesus Christ, the peaceable Saviour, let it be our steady concern to demonstrate to the world that we are his followers, by bringing forth the fruits of the spirit, "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,"* and as we are called out of wars and fightings, so let them be as seldom as possible the subjects of our conversation; but let a holy care rest upon us, to abide in that power which gives dominion over the hopes and fears that arise from the concerns of an unstable world, and tend, as they are admitted into the mind, to lessen the trust on that rock which is immoveable. Thus, like faithful Abraham, may we hope for preservation, and be qualified to approach the throne of mercy in intercession for others, at a time when the tokens of divine displeasure are manifest. Let us keep in mind that declaration of our Lord, "My kingdom is not of this world;" for they whose kingdom is of this world, will only strive for the things thereof. Therefore, we beseech you, "mind your calling," that it may be evident you are not seeking a city here, but one to come, "which hath everlasting foundations, whose builder and maker is God."†

We think it incumbent upon us, in this time of severity, particularly to impress it upon our brethren to open their hearts and hands freely, for the relief of the poor and needy of all denominations. Those in affluence especially ought ever to bear in mind, that none are intrusted with riches that they may indulge them-

* GAL. V. 22, 23.

† HEB. xi. 10.

selves in pleasures, or for the gratification of luxury, ambition, or vain-glory; but to do good, and to communicate thereof; by which the afflictions of the distressed will be mitigated, and even outward substance rendered a mean of laying up a good foundation against the time to come: "For he that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again."*

As the descendants of our worthy ancestors, who bore the burden in the heat of the day, are very near and dear to us; so it is with anxious concern we observe the lamentable declension and departure of many from that noble simplicity which dignified their predecessors. We earnestly recommend to all parents to abide under the cross of Christ, that they may be enabled, both by example and precept, to manifest a diligent care to bring up their offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And as it doth please the God and Father of all our mercies, often to touch their tender minds with a sense of his goodness, and raise desires in them to become his children, such dispositions should be cherished as much as possible, and nothing promoted in them by which submission to the power of the cross of Christ will be rendered more difficult; for this they must endure, in order to be crucified to the vanities and follies of this world, if ever they are happily brought into the way that leads to the kingdom of God. And the time will come, when it will be very grievous to such parents, who, by wrong indulgence, or evil example, have been a mean to burden the souls of their children in this respect.

It is therefore the weighty concern of this meeting to intreat all parents and guardians of children solidly to consider the importance of the charge committed to them; and that it is their indispensable duty early to direct their tender minds, and affections to the choice of sobriety, virtue, and true godliness, and to represent to them the uncertainty and emptiness of all temporal delights, as well as the certain sorrow which will inevitably overtake evil doers, and those who forget God.

We salute you in the love of the gospel: "Peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."†

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN FREETH,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

* PROV. xix. 17.

† EPHES. vi. 24.

EPISTLE LXXXI—1758.

Dearly Beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the spring of true gospel fellowship, which spreads, in divine love to the whole flock and family of God, where ever scattered, we most tenderly and affectionately salute you; with earnest prayers to the Father of mercies for your preservation and increase in the living and eternal truth.

We are bound, in deep humility, reverently to acknowledge, that we have been eminently favoured, in this our annual assembly, with the virtue of that unction from the Holy One, which is the fundamental principle and life of our religion, and the crown of our meetings; by the help whereof, affairs have been conducted in much brotherly love and condescension, to our great satisfaction, and to the praise of our gracious God; who, with the Lord Jesus Christ, is worthy of dominion and glory, worship and obedience, for ever and ever.

By advices from the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, New-York, Maryland, Virginia, South-Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey; and also by the verbal relation of two Friends lately returned from America, we have comfortable accounts of the prosperity of Friends in the truth in various parts, especially among the youth; who we desire may be encouraged to keep their ranks in righteousness, that they may faithfully succeed, and fill the places of the many valuable Friends whom divine Providence hath been pleased to remove, from works to rewards. Some convincement hath appeared since last year.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, from the counties in England and Wales, being principally for tithes, and church-rates, so called, is three thousand two hundred and sixty-seven pounds, and upwards; and those from Ireland, one thousand six hundred and seventy-nine pounds, and upwards.

And, dear Friends; let us ever keep in remembrance, that it is under the immediate teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit that all acceptable worship is performed, and all true gospel ministry supplied; that this pure and powerful influence, in vessels sanctified and prepared by the divine hand, is the essential qualification to that work; that as the gift is divine, the service is freely and faithfully to be discharged, without any view to reward from man; and therefore, should we voluntarily, either by open or collusive means, contribute to the maintenance of such as preach for hire, we should be guilty of inconsistency in prac-

tice, by supporting, as ministers of Christ, those whom we do not believe to be sent by him, and upholding them in a conduct contrary to his command, which is, "Freely ye have received, freely give."* And this practical opposition to his gospel law we cannot but look upon as "denying him before men," and therefore, in us Antichristian.

As the same occasion continues, we find it our concern to repeat the following advice from our last year's epistle; viz.

' It having been weightily under the consideration of this meeting to discourage all under our profession from that great inconsistency of being concerned in privateers, letters of marque, or ships armed in a warlike manner, we think it necessary very earnestly to recommend to all Quarterly and Monthly Meetings to keep a watchful eye over their members, in this important branch of our christian testimony; and where any inclination towards such practices appears, that timely admonition and suitable counsel be given in the spirit of love and meekness.

' And, dear Friends; as it hath pleased the Almighty to reveal unto mankind his Son Christ Jesus, the peaceable Saviour, let it be our steady concern to demonstrate to the world that we are his followers, by bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." ' And as we are called out of wars and fightings, so let them be, as seldom as possible, the subjects of our conversation; but let a holy care rest upon us, to abide in that power which gives dominion over the hopes and fears that arise from the concerns of an unstable world, and tend, as they are admitted into the mind, to lessen its trust on that rock which is immoveable. Thus, like faithful Abraham, may we hope for preservation, and be qualified to approach the throne of mercy in intercession for others, at a time when the tokens of divine displeasure are manifest. Let us keep in mind that declaration of our Lord, "My kingdom is not of this world;"† for they whose kingdom is of this world, will only strive for the things thereof. Therefore we beseech you "mind your calling," ' that it may be evident you are not seeking a city here, but one to come, "which hath everlasting foundations, whose builder and maker is God."‡

We also fervently warn all in profession with us, that they be careful to avoid being any way concerned in reaping the unrighteous profits arising from that iniquitous practice of dealing in negroes and other slaves; whereby, in the original purchase, one man selleth another, as he doth the beast that perishes, without

* MAT. x. 8. † JOHN xviii. 36. ‡ HEB. xi. 10.

any better pretension to a property in him, than that of superior force; in direct violation of the gospel rule, which teacheth every one "to do as they would be done by," and "to do good unto all;" being the reverse of that covetous disposition, which furnishes encouragement to those poor ignorant people to perpetuate their savage wars, in order to supply the demands of the most unnatural traffick, whereby great numbers of mankind, free by nature, are subjected to inextricable bondage; and which hath often been observed to fill their possessors with haughtiness, tyranny, luxury, and barbarity, corrupting the minds, and debasing the morals of their children, to the unspeakable prejudice of religion and virtue, and the exclusion of that Holy Spirit of universal love, meekness, and charity, which is the unchangeable nature, and the glory, of true christianity. We therefore can do no less, than, with the greatest earnestness, impress it upon Friends every where, that they endeavour to keep their hands clear of this unrighteous gain of oppression.

It has been the frequent concern of this meeting, by former advices, to press all parents, guardians, and heads of families, to a strict watch over the conduct and behaviour of their children, servants, and the youth under their care: and in order that they themselves may be properly qualified to discharge so great and necessary a duty, we earnestly recommend, that in whatsoever relation they stand to the rising generation, they be very circumspect and exemplary in every particular of their own conduct, and be fully given up in faithful obedience to the manifestations of light and grace received, whereby they will be enabled to advise and reprove with proper authority; and to restrain those under them from all superfluous and hurtful things, which may be in their power to prevent. And it is incumbent upon such parents and others to consider, that if, through inattention or unfaithfulness, they indulge, connive at, or tacitly encourage the deviation of the youth from the paths of purity and holiness, notwithstanding indifference and lukewarmness may so far prevail as to lull them asleep for a season; yet an awakening time will overtake them, wherein the loss sustained by the youth through their neglect, may in a great measure be charged to their account.

Notwithstanding the frequent and earnest advices of this meeting, for the promoting the diligent attendance of meetings for the worship of Almighty God, on the First and other days of the week, we sorrowfully observe, in divers places, too great a remissness therein, especially in the latter. We therefore tenderly exhort such as through fear of neglecting their temporal concerns, or other considerations, are kept from a due attendance of these

meetings, seriously to consider that gracious promise left upon record, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."* Some of us having to testify, by blessed experience, that our outward affairs have not suffered by giving up our time the few hours set apart for religious worship; but, on the contrary, our minds have been thereby greatly strengthened to come up with propriety in the duties we owe to God, to our families, and to all mankind.

Let us call to remembrance the zeal of our honourable predecessors, who, when they had great reason to expect they should be driven into noisome and pestilential prisons, sent into banishment, or subjected to other grievous sufferings, for meeting together on no other account but to worship God according to their consciences; yet, in the strength of that holy faith and love which supported them in suffering, they failed not constantly to keep up their meetings, at the hazard of all, and expence of many, of their lives, liberties, and properties.

In a thankful sense of the goodness of God, we salute you throughout all the churches; breathing in spirit, that the holy dew may rest upon your minds, and make you fruitful to every good word and work.

"Grace be unto you, and peace from him, which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the prince of the kings of the earth; to whom with the Father be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Signed in and on behalf, of the Yearly Meeting, by

GILBERT THOMPSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXXII—1759.

Dear and well beloved Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in our Lord Jesus Christ with love unfeigned; earnestly desiring, that in all your meetings you may be edified and comforted in a sense of his divine presence, and may be preserved in all holiness of life, and godliness of conversation, to the praise of him who hath called you to glory and virtue.

We have been greatly refreshed under an awful and tender

* MAT. vi. 33.

sense of the goodness of God, communicated to us in this our large and solemn assembly; by the assistance whereof, we have been enabled to transact the weighty affairs before us in much brotherly love and unity: in consideration of which, we are deeply bowed in thankfulness to the God of all grace, to worship and adore him; who, with the Lord Jesus Christ, is worthy of praise, dominion, and glory, for ever and ever.

By the accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, and New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, North and South-Carolina, Barbadoes, and Tortola; and also by a Friend lately returned from a religious visit to Friends on the continent of America, we have comfortable information that love and unity are generally preserved; that the precious visitation of divine life continues with freshness amongst many, especially of the youth; and that some have been added to the church since our last account.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year from England and Wales, being chiefly for tithes and those called church-rates, amount to two thousand eight hundred and thirty-nine pounds, and upwards; and those from Ireland, to one thousand five hundred and sixty-five pounds, and upwards. One Friend, in the course of last year, was committed to prison, for his christian testimony against tithes; and although he was discharged by a supersedeas, yet, from the rough usage he met with by those employed to take him up, joined to his other bodily weakness and infirmities, he could not be safely removed, but soon after departed this life in prison, aged about ninety-seven years.

And, dear Friends; it seems incumbent upon us to repeat our exhortation to faithfulness, in supporting our testimony against the Antichristian yoke of tithes: and we intreat that all who suffer, either upon that account, or for any other demands inconsistent with the principles of truth, may demonstrate, by their whole conduct and conversation, that they really suffer for conscience sake; and keep close to the guidance of that good Spirit, which will preserve in meekness and quiet resignation under every trial. For if resentment should arise against those whom you may look upon as the instruments of your sufferings, it will deprive you of the reward of faithfulness, give just occasion of offence, and bring dishonour to the cause of truth. Cavilling, or casting reflections upon any because of our sufferings, do not become the servants of Christ, whose holy example and footsteps we ought in all things faithfully to follow.

And this meeting being sorrowfully affected with consideration

of a great defection in some among us from the practice of justice and morality, divers of whom, from negligence, inattention, or ill-grounded hopes, and others from motives of ambition, and an eager pursuit after the world, have launched out of their depth, and entered into various schemes and branches of commerce, beyond their abilities to manage; and some of them into scandalous practices, to uphold a temporary credit, greatly to the reproach of our society, and in open contradiction to that principle of universal righteousness we profess; which taught our ancestors such conduct, as to extort a confession from our enemies, that, respecting many of them, they could not find any occasion, unless concerning the LAW of their God.

Fresh and lamentable cause hath been offered to renew former advices on this head, which are well expressed in a paragraph in our general epistle of 1754, in these words:

‘ We beseech you, brethren, stand upon your guard against the love of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches; the nature of which is to choak the good seed, and to render men unfruitful. An eager pursuit after the grandeur of this world, is a certain token of earthly mindedness; and those who “mind earthly things,” are represented by the apostle Paul as “enemies of the cross of Christ.” ‘ The beloved disciple of our Lord also expressly assures us, that “if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”* ‘ A resolution to be rich hath destroyed many. “They that will be rich,”† saith the apostle, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” ‘ This hath been verified in the ruinous consequences of an earthly ambitious spirit, pushing men forward, in the pursuit of greatness, upon hazardous attempts, which have too often issued in the fall and ruin of themselves and families, the reproach of the society, and great loss to others. Some of whom, probably, have placed the more confidence in them for the sake of their profession of self-denial, which, had they really practised, would have prevented the fatal effects of their covetous and ambitious undertakings. Wherefore we intreat Friends, in their Monthly Meetings every where, to be properly watchful over one another, and early to caution all against running beyond their depth, and entangling themselves in a greater multiplicity of trade and business than they can extricate themselves from with honour and reputation. And where any shall proceed in opposition to such

* J. JOHN ii. 15.

† 1 TIM. vi. 9, 10.

'advice and counsel of their brethren, let them in due time be dealt with according to former advices of this meeting.'

And it is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that if any fall short of paying their just debts, and a composition is made with their creditors to accept of a part, instead of the whole; notwithstanding the parties may look upon themselves legally discharged of any obligation to pay the remainder, yet the principle we profess enjoins full satisfaction to be made, if ever the debtors are of ability. And in order that such may the better retrieve their circumstances, we exhort them to submit to a manner of living in every respect the most conducive to this purpose, and correspondent to the state they are reduced to: it being exceedingly dishonourable for any to live in ostentation and greatness at the expense of others; which is certainly the case, where any part of the debts, due by the law of equity and strict justice, remains unpaid. And that Friends, in their Monthly Meetings, be cautious how they admit such, whose debts are unsatisfied, into full unity, or receive their collections, which cannot probably be deemed of their own.

And as, ever since we have been a people separate from others, we have held it to be our indispensable duty frequently to meet together, to pay our public acknowledgments to the great author of our being and well-being, and to bear open testimony to the purity and spirituality of that worship which he requires: let not any be negligent in giving due attendance at the time and place appointed for this necessary duty, both on First-days, and other days of the week. And as it is an awful thing to approach the presence of the infinite majesty of heaven and earth, the dread of nations, let due reverence possess every mind upon these solemn occasions; that no lightness or airiness appear in their coming in, nor any restless motions or noises be made, which may disturb the solemnity of the meeting; but that all may demonstrate they come not to gratify the itching ear, or to entertain a vain curiosity, by that seriousness and gravity in their demeanour, which becomes a people truly concerned to wait upon God in awful stillness and humility, and to worship him in spirit and in truth.

And, dear Friends; as the merciful visitations of the God of all grace are still renewed through Jesus Christ our Lord, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, let us receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls, that we may experience an advancement in the work of redemption from the lusts of this world, and our minds be established in peace. And as we are preserved in a constant sense of his justice, wisdom, and mercy, we shall fear always, and therein fast acceptably to the

Lord ; and being enabled to wash our hands in innocency, may compass the altar of God ; and, under these necessary qualifications, pour forth our souls before him, for the enlargement of his kingdom on earth, and the increase of that righteousness which exalts a nation. An humble and grateful sense of the mercies of our heavenly Father, every way extended, will also remain with us, and fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise to himself ; a tribute ever due to him from all his people, and acknowledged with the deepest solemnity ; not with those tumultuous demonstrations of joy, which are often attended with rioting and drunkenness ; and, instead of being acceptable to an holy, pure God, rather tend to increase the weight of national transgressions.

Let us, therefore, be found worshippers within the temple ; and be cautious how any of us give occasion of additional suffering to the truly conscientious amongst us, by any compliance with such observations as our worthy ancestors were rightly concerned to bear testimony against.

Finally, brethren, we recommend you to the grace of God, and to a diligent watchfulness in his fear, which, in holy writ, is said to be “ a fountain of life, preserving from the snares of death.”* And let us “ be sober ; putting on the breast plate of faith and “ love, and, for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath “ not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord “ Jesus Christ ; to whom with the father, be honour, glory, and “ power, for ever and ever.”†

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JEREMIAH WARING,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXXIII—1760.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In a renewed sense of divine love, at this time communicated to us, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the fellowship of the gospel, we tenderly and affectionately salute you ; earnestly desiring your preservation, increase and establishment, in the blessed truth, which is precious above all other enjoyments, and which endureth throughout all generations.

We have abundant cause, with deep thankfulness to praise and magnify the name of our God, and humbly to acknowledge his

* PROV. xiv. 27.

† 1 THESS. v. 8, 9.

goodness extended to us, in this our large and solemn assembly ; the weighty affairs whereof, through divine assistance, have been transacted in much brotherly love and christian condescension ; greatly to the satisfaction and comfort of those who keep Zion in remembrance, and are truly concerned in spirit, that “ her righteousness may go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, “ as a lamp that burneth.”

By accounts brought in this year, the sufferings of Friends, being principally for tithes, and those called church rates, amount in England and Wales, to two thousand nine hundred and eighty-four pounds and upwards ; and those in Ireland, to one thousand five hundred and sixty-eight pounds and upwards. Great damage hath also been sustained by Friends, in many places, for not illuminating their houses on those called rejoicing nights, and a non-compliance with other practises inconsistent with our profession.

By advices received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, and New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Tortola ; and by the relation of a Friend lately returned from visiting the churches in America, we have satisfactory accounts of some growth and prosperity in the truth, in divers parts ; notwithstanding we sorrowfully observe a defection in others.

As, in these times, many hearts are measurably awakened to religious inquiries, and a concern raised to seek the way of salvation, many being secretly dissatisfied with the empty forms in which they have had their education, and are looking about for help, and remarking the conduct of the various religious societies, with this inquiry in their minds, “ who shall show us any good ? ” We beseech you, shake yourselves from the dust of the earth, and put on those beautiful garments of righteousness, purity, and heavenly mindedness, wherein our worthy ancestors were clothed, and made instrumental to turn many to God. If the ever glorious and powerful truth, which wrought mightily in them for their salvation, and rendered them as lights in the world, be by us properly attended to, the same blessed effects will accompany us, and many humble seeking souls will, by our fruitfulness, be induced to glorify the Father which is in heaven.

Dear Friends, let us remember this end of our high and holy calling, and keep it steadily in view ; so shall we be truly enabled to direct those seeking souls in the way to peace. On the contrary, if these awakened inquirers, being induced, by the spirituality of our profession, to look towards us with hopes of finding

what they inquire for, should observe amongst us, the prevalence of the same things they are awakened to flee from, and a want of that substance they are earnestly seeking after, how lamentable must their portion be, who furnish occasion of offence to these little ones ?

And, dear Friends, abide in the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and is the true mark of discipleship; this will guard us against listening after, or giving any encouragement to reports tending to the prejudice one of another: pertinent to this is that necessary and salutary command, *EXOD. xxiii. 1.* "Thou shalt not raise or receive a false report;" and also forget not that exhortation of the apostle, *GAL. vi. 1.* "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

As the right education of children, and the nurture of youth, is of very great consequence to them, and to the succeeding generation, we pressingly exhort all parents and heads of families, to procure such useful learning for their children, as their abilities will admit; and encourage them, as well by example as precept, to the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures; and that they begin, as early as possible, to instil into their tender minds the principles of truth and virtue; instruct them in the nature and necessity of being born from above; without which, our Lord declared, "no man shall see the kingdom of God:" And in order hereunto, that they labour to bring them acquainted with the holy seed, which is sowed, by the divine hand in every heart, for that gracious end; that they may, through the Lord's blessing upon such pious and paternal endeavours, be induced to place their affections upon it, and, cleaving thereto in faithful obedience, come to experience it to be unto them, "Christ within, the hope of their glory."

The importance of an early instruction in the law of God, is set forth with peculiar strength, clearness and solemnity, in *DEUT. vi. 4. &c.* "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." It is requisite also, that restraint be added to instruction: it being much easier, as well as more prudent, to be exercised upon the first appearances of an inclination to dangerous or hurtful liberties, than afterwards. For where children, through the preva-

lence of fond affection, have been accustomed to improper indulgences, when they are grown to such a dangerous degree of ripeness, that the exertion of authority hath become absolutely necessary, the strength of their passions, so habituated, hath often proved unconquerable, or very difficult to overcome; to the great hurt of the unhappy youth, and the unspeakable grief of the imprudently indulgent parents.

We therefore earnestly intreat, that it may be the constant care of all parents, guardians, masters and mistresses, properly to teach, restrain and example those whom providence hath placed under them, for their help, direction and preservation, and for whom an account must be rendered; bringing them up in the fear of the Lord, and in that sobriety, moderation and plainness in speech, apparel and deportment, which becomes a people professing to be the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect pattern of humility and self-denial, "who made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant;"* yet is styled in the Holy Scriptures, "the blessed and only potentate, the king of kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light."†

And as it hath pleased the Lord to preserve us in the times of imminent danger, and disappoint the designs of those who sought to involve us in confusion and distress, and to grant us hitherto the enjoyment of the comfortable fruits of peace; Oh! that an awful sense of his unmerited favour, and the deep obligations it lays upon us, to fear always before him, may have due impression upon all our minds! Then will a constant care be maintained, so to live and walk before God and man, as to carry evident conviction that, though we concur not with others in the exterior demonstrations of thanksgivings, or fasting for public events, we are not insensible of the instruction they convey, and that we are seeking, in good earnest, the proper end of the Lord's judgments in the earth; "that the inhabitants thereof may learn righteousness."

And, dear Friends; being influenced by the sentiments of humanity, still more enforced by the tender compassion and sympathy which the gospel of Jesus-Christ our Lord imparts, we bewail the dreadful desolation and ravages of war, in various parts of the world, wherein many of our fellow subjects and others deeply partake; and we are engaged humbly to supplicate the most high, to put an end to the tumultuous rage of nations, and exalt the sceptre of the prince of peace.

We earnestly pray the Lord of all power, effectually to bless his gracious visitations, to the help of his church and people, that

* PHIL. ii. 7.

† 1 TIM. vi. 15, 16.

we may thereby be stirred up to diligence to discharge the duty of our day, and be enabled to look, with humble confidence, to the recompense of rewards; suitably improving every manifestation of divine counsel, and attentive how “we hear that word “that goeth out of his mouth, and shall not return to him void.” Thus shall we be gathered to him, in whom the mediation and acceptance with the Father stands; and, being enriched with the durable treasures that are hid in Christ Jesus, be experimentally united to those who are “come unto mount Zion, and unto the “city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels: to the general assembly of the “church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to “God the Judge of all:” To whom, with Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN GURNEY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXXIV—1761.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

Under a sense of that ancient love and life, whereby we were gathered to be a people, we tenderly salute you; earnestly desiring that grace, mercy and peace, through the knowledge of God the Father, and his beloved Son, may abound amongst you.

We have renewed cause, humbly to acknowledge the gracious condescension of the God of all our mercies, manifested to us in this our annual assembly, whereby our souls have been comforted in his presence, our hope in his salvation renewed, and the bond of true fellowship again confirmed, under a fresh sense that it is his good pleasure we should be continued a people, to the praise of his great and ever worthy name. In a degree of this uniting virtue and holy influence, we have been enabled to transact the affairs, which have come before us, in much brotherly kindness and condescension, and strengthened to pursue the great object of the churches' care, the promotion of spiritual health and vigour in every member of the body, that it may be presented holy and acceptable to him who hath called us to glory and virtue.

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales, brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand two hundred and twenty-five

pounds and upwards; and those from Ireland, one thousand six hundred and seventy-nine pounds and upwards. Against these and other demands, inconsistent with the gospel dispensation, the testimony of truth seems to spread, to the opening of the understanding of many, heretofore ignorant of our religious principles.

The accounts received this year from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and the epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, New-York, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, South-Carolina, and Tortola, have afforded us some comfortable observations, that harmony and concord subsist, in a good degree, throughout the churches; that a lively concern is maintained in many places, for the support of discipline, and for the promotion of truth and righteousness.

It likewise appears from these accounts, that divers are convinced of that truth in which we have most surely believed, and have joined themselves to our religious community since last year. We therefore earnestly entreat Friends every where, to walk in the light, and manifest by a circumspect conversation in godly fear, that our testimony to the power and sufficiency of the divine Spirit, is founded on the everlasting gospel. Thus, no occasion of stumbling will be administered to the weak, but many, beholding amongst us the fruits of righteousness, may have cause with us to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

When it pleased the Lord to visit our predecessors in the truth, they were as sheep without a shepherd, without a place of feeding, or a fold of rest; scattered, as many are at this day, on the barren mountains of forms and traditions; yet inwardly hungering after substance, which they saw not how to obtain, it pleased the author of these secret strong desires, in his own time, to open to their understandings the nature of his kingdom, the spirituality of that worship which was acceptable to him, and the blessed advantages of his gospel when received, not in word only, but in power.

As their minds were thus enlightened, an awful sense of the Lord Almighty, the all-seeing Father of Spirits, prevailed therein, and led them from a dependance on outward performances, to a silent, solemn adoration in simplicity of heart, humbly waiting for that help, without which none can worship with acceptance.

In this frame of mind they were made sensible of the accomplishment of his promise, that "those who wait upon him, should renew their strength;"* hereby they were enabled to endure a sight of afflictions, to which they were exposed for the

* Isa. xl. 31.

sake of their christian testimony : for, against them it may be truly said, no occasion was found, but “ concerning the law of “ their God.”

And, dear Friends ; as it hath pleased divine goodness clearly to manifest amongst us the way of life and salvation, and to instruct us where and how to wait for him, prize, we beseech you, these precious privileges ; keep all your meetings in the name of the Lord, and let your minds be established in an humble waiting upon him with reverence and fear ; so shall strength be added to your strength, and being more closely united to him, you will experience the indwelling of his blessed Spirit : and as an increase of access to the fountain of mercies is experienced, our advices to the constant attendance of meetings for religious worship, both on the First and other days of the week, will become less necessary : our resort to them will be with diligence, and a careful observance of the hour appointed ; our demeanour in them will manifest an humble and single trust in that power which is “ a “ covert from the storms, a shelter from the tempest, and as rivers of water in dry places.” So shall we be enabled, as watchful, circumspect servants, to stand fast in our several stations, being preachers of righteousness to the world ; and, as good stewards in the household of God, instruct, reprove, and restrain those under our care, with wisdom, long-suffering, meekness, yet authority.

The neglect of this most important concern, of waiting upon the Lord for the renewal of strength to discharge every duty, hath been one great cause of declension, amongst many of us as a people, from that lively zeal and uniform piety, which are now, and ever have been, the fruits of the Holy Spirit : the sense whereof having deeply affected our minds, hath induced us to enlarge upon this subject.

And here we find it our concern, to revive a truth which is worthy of general remembrance ; that no affectation of singularity was the cause of a demeanour, both civil and religious, in our forefathers, (or in the faithful of this day, different in many respects from the conduct of those among whom we dwell) they beholding the vanity, unprofitableness, and insincerity of the salutations, customs and fashions of the world ; observing the examples of our blessed Saviour and his followers, with the frequent testimonies recorded in Holy Writ, to the necessity of a self-denying life and conversation, together with the law, and the testimony revealed in their hearts, retained in view the injunction of the apostle, “ Not to be conformed to this world, but to be “ transformed, by the renewings of the mind, that we may prove

“ what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”* May an uprightness of heart, as in the sight of God, ever attend this simplicity of appearance; that none, by a conduct inconsistent therewith, may furnish occasion for the testimony to be evil spoken of or despised.

We conclude with an earnest recommendation of the apostle’s advice to the primitive believers; “ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.”† The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

WILLIAM FRY,

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE LXXXV—1762.

Dear and well beloved Friends,

Our hearts being renewedly affected with a lively sense of the continuation of the Father’s love, in Christ Jesus, to his church and people, we tenderly and affectionately salute you, with fervent desires that grace and love, through faith and obedience, may increase and abound amongst you.

With reverent thankfulness to the God of all our mercies, we have to acknowledge, that he hath favoured this assembly with his enlivening and comforting presence, both in our meetings for worship, and in those for transacting the weighty concerns of the society: the minds of many having been deeply engaged in these solemnities, to promote purity of faith, and holiness of life, that the church may shine forth in her ancient beauty.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year, being principally for tithes and those called church-rates, amount in England and Wales to two thousand seven hundred and ninety-six pounds and upwards; and those in Ireland, to one thousand seven hundred and two pounds and upwards. And it seems to us expedient to renew our exhortation, that Friends every where be stirred up to faithfulness in our christian testimony against such demands; being firmly persuaded, that a forced maintenance, and contribu-

* ROM. xii, 2.

† PHIL. iv. 8.

tions on religious accounts exacted by compulsion, are inconsistent with the Spirit and precepts of the gospel.

We earnestly desire likewise, that all collusive and indirect methods of satisfying these demands may be guarded against, as all temporizing compliances tend to cloud the understanding; weaken the faith, and destroy the service of individuals, as well as to obstruct the progress of truth, and increase the sufferings of the faithful.

And, dear Friends; as we are religiously engaged to render unto God the things that are his, in bearing our testimony to the free ministry, and peaceable Spirit of his Son, we shall find it our indispensable duty, to continue stedfast in our principle against defrauding the king in any part of his customs, duties or excise; respecting which, to our great satisfaction we find, Friends are generally clear: yet, as in maritime counties especially, some may be exposed to the temptation of buying run goods for private use, we desire it may be impressed upon all to be conscientiously concerned, in obedience to the law of God, gratitude to the king, and justice to our fellow subjects, to avoid and discountenance a practice so iniquitous in itself, injurious to the fair trader, and not supported but by fraud and violence, in direct opposition to the laws and good order of civil society.

By advices from the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland; New-York; Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland; Virginia, and North-Carolina, we have satisfactory accounts of the preservation of love and unity in general, the prosperity of truth in the minds of many, and some convincement in divers places. And though we have abundant confirmation, that the Lord's presence is still with us, yet too many, for want of due watchfulness and circumspection, have erred from the truth, and by departing from the footsteps of the flock of Christ, and giving way to the Spirit of the world, have followed after lying vanities, and forsaken their own mercies.

And, dear Friends; under a weighty sense of the pernicious effects of this prevailing worldly Spirit, the tendency whereof is to hinder the growth and prosperity of truth in the hearts of mankind, we have, at this time, been sorrowfully affected, and are engaged to beseech all, in the love of the gospel, and by the mercies of the living God, seriously to consider the gracious visitation yet evidently extended to us: and that, as our calling is high and holy, we may demonstrate to those who are looking upon us, that our affections are not fixed on uncertain riches, that we are redeemed from the inordinate pursuit of earthly en-

joyments, and “seek a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”*

We therefore intreat you, to be awakened in soul, to watch against the spirit of the world, and the ensnaring approaches of its temptations: be not deceived; for it remains an unchangeable truth, “That if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”† Let us therefore be wise in that wisdom which is from above, and being loosened from the pursuit of perishing things, we may more and more experience the glorious liberty of the truth, and be enabled to adorn the doctrine of our Lord and Master, by a life conformed to his example.

And, as many of our worthy elders have of late years been removed from us by death, we tenderly intreat, that an holy concern may prevail on your minds, who are of the rising generation, to fill up their places; first taking heed to yourselves, “seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness,”‡ that so you may be preserved through the temptations, and from all the delusions in this life, and may become instruments, in the hand of God, to promote his honour, the good of his church, and the universal advancement of piety and virtue. And dearly beloved youth, call to remembrance the examples of Joseph, Moses, Samuel, and many other instances of early piety; consider the preservation they were favoured with through every trial, and the nature of that dignity wherewith their names have been transmitted through many generations: he who raised and supported them, and hath, from age to age, formed a people to testify to his salvation, and stand faithful to the cause of righteousness, hath ever rewarded them with serenity of mind, and the enjoyment of that peace, “which is as a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God.”|| Let not the amusements, the gaieties, and other delusive follies, which too many earnestly pursue, take up your minds, and thereby prevent your offering the early tribute of love and obedience, so justly due to the author of your being, and the fountain of every blessing.

And, ye parents, guardians, and heads of families, consider we beseech you, how much depends upon your promoting this holy engagement among the youth, and labour to discharge your duty as in the sight of God; watch over them in love, and train them up early in the way wherein they should go, by information and example; seeking daily for a renewal of wisdom and strength to walk before them in holiness and godly fear. Let it be your care to instruct them early in the Holy Scriptures, and teach them to delight therein; that being seasoned with the sacred truths in

* HEB. xi. 10. † JOHN ii. 15. ‡ MAT. vi. 33. || PSAL. xli. 4.

them recorded, they may be preserved from the corrupting influence of such books, as tend to leaven the mind into vanity, profaneness, and infidelity, and also kept in innocency of life, sobriety of manners, plainness of habit, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned. And in order that the tender mind may be more effectually guarded and preserved pure, we earnestly recommend it to parents and others, to consider the disadvantage of placing them out, for education or business, where they must be unavoidably subjected to the dangers of mixt and improper company and conversation, by which the good and salutary impressions, heretofore made on their minds, may be effaced, the effect of present visitations prevented, to their great, if not irretrievable loss.

And, dear Friends; let us, in all our conduct and conversation manifest that simplicity and godly sincerity which were in former times, and still remain to be the proper fruits of the christian religion, that by well-doing, we may be enabled to confute gainsayers, "and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men;"* ever remembering, the strongest testimony we can give of the excellency of our religious principles, is their efficacy on our lives, to redeem us from the corruptions that are in the world, and purify us unto God a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead
 "our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the
 "blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every
 "good work to do his will, working in you that which is well
 "pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: To whom be glory
 "for ever and ever."† Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

EDWARD GULSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXXVI—1763.

Dearly Beloved Friends and Brethren,

We have renewed cause, in deep thankfulness, to acknowledge the continuance of divine regard, manifested to us in this large assembly; and in a sense of the refreshing influences of that love, which first gathered and united us into an heavenly fellowship in our Lord Jesus Christ, we tenderly salute you.

* 1 PET. ii. 15.

† HEB. xiii. 20, 21.

In a good degree of this pure and precious love, we have been enabled to transact the affairs of this meeting, in brotherly condescension and concord, to our mutual edification and comfort.

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales, brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, is two thousand six hundred and sixty-nine pounds and upwards; and from Ireland, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-one pounds and upwards.

By the accounts received from the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, and South-Carolina; and by the verbal relation of a Friend lately returned from a religious visit to some parts of America, we are informed, that the churches are generally preserved in peace and unity; that a lively zeal is revived for the maintenance of discipline and good order; that there is a good disposition and great openness amongst the people in many places; and divers have been convinced of the blessed truth.

As it is apparent that many, through the flowings forth of infinite goodness, are under a powerful visitation from on high, into whose hearts the divine light hath so clearly shined, as to discover the insufficiency, of the strictest observation of ceremonies and human traditions, which cannot make the comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the conscience:

These being engaged in an earnest pursuit after never-failing substance, are seeking that bread the world knows not of, and looking out for a people, whose affections are set on things above, with whom they may unite in spirit, and join in worship to the Most High. The eyes of many being turned towards us with this view, let us gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace which is to be revealed, walking in godliness and honesty in the sight of all men; that by the circumspection, innocency and purity of our lives and conversations, we may demonstrate we are not of the world, but are redeemed from its spirit; and having put on Christ, the righteousness of saints, are not making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof: so shall we be examples to those who are enquiring the way to true rest and peace.

And, dear young people; as some of you, in many places, have embraced the renewed visitations of divine love in your hearts, and have, in degree, entered into covenant with your Creator; strong is the engagement we feel for your preservation and advancement in the path of the just; that through the power of divine grace, and your faithful obedience thereunto, you may

become useful members in the body, and fill up the various stations in the church, to its edification and your own lasting advantage.

And the youth in general we intreat; that a constant care be upon all your minds, to press after the power and virtue of that heavenly principle, in the profession whereof most of you have had your education. If you keep your places therein, it will preserve you; but if through disobedience ye depart therefrom, ye forsake your own mercies, and others will take your crown. Remember the children of Abraham, by deviating from the steps of their fathers, lost the privileges and blessings they would otherwise have been entitled to.

And we beseech you, who are engaging in the affairs of this life, that in the first place, you seek carefully after his favour, whose is the earth and the fulness thereof; and hath promised to be found of those that seek him early. Endeavour to build your houses in his wisdom, who alone can give duration and stability to every blessing, and direct how to use them to his own praise, and the solid benefit of the favoured receiver. As ye abide in his fear, you will have an eye to a glorious inheritance, and be kept from high expensive living, and evil emulation of others who may affect a splendid appearance, and be preserved from the many snares which are laid to increase the afflicting instances of folly and misconduct.

May the holy principle of truth prevail in your minds, whom Providence hath intrusted with affluence, that your inclinations and affections may be rightly bounded, and not carried away, by a perversion of the divine bounty, into pride, indolence, or extravagance; which have led many to exceed their ability, whereby they have brought ruin upon themselves, damage to those with whom they have been concerned, and great affliction and reproach to our society.

We think it seasonable, at this time, to renew our exhortation, that Friends every where be especially careful to keep their hands clear of giving encouragement, in any shape, to the slave-trade, it being evidently destructive to the natural rights of mankind; who are all ransomed by one Saviour, and visited by one divine light, in order to salvation: a traffick calculated to enrich and aggrandize some, upon the misery of others; in its nature abhorrent to every just and tender sentiment, and contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel.

And, dear Friends; as it hath pleased the Most High, who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, so to influence human affairs, that peace is again restored; we earnestly desire, that an humble sense of so great mercy, may rest upon all our minds: that, in a

grateful commemoration of his wonderful kindness, who hath preserved these kingdoms from the desolation and distress which attended divers others countries, we may reverently acknowledge it is the Lord's doing, and ought to be marvellous in our eyes: and, as the best return for favours received, let us, through divine assistance, bring forth fruits of an holy and blameless conversation; endeavouring to advance his righteous kingdom amongst mankind, that his salvation may become our walls and bulwarks, in every trial permitted to come upon us, by that God who judgeth the earth.

And although the favour of princes hath never been the rule of our dutiful submission and fidelity to them, being bound by our religious principles to a quiet and peaceable conduct, even when under severe sufferings; yet inasmuch as the obligations of gratitude, for the enjoyment of our religious and civil liberties, are added to those of duty, let their united impressions engage all our minds, to walk with great circumspection and integrity, evidencing an humble thankfulness to the wise and gracious disposer of events; and to the king, the just returns of loyalty and obedience, in every part of our conduct and converse, carefully avoiding any instance of indecent freedom, either in language or behaviour.

And, dear brethren; we recommend to every individual, a sincere and solemn inquiry into the state of your own minds; and beseech you, strive to enter in at the strait gate, and live under the yoke of Christ, walking in reverence and godly fear at all times; ever feeling after the virtue and power of truth to season your spirits, and keep you in stillness of mind, which will wean you from the love of this world. Herein you will feel drawings to meet with your brethren for the worship of God; and, when you present your bodies before the Lord, labour diligently after inward silence, and abstraction of thought from all worldly objects, that so you may feel the gentle operation of the holy seed, the light and leaven of the kingdom. This will manifest the ground from whence every thought and motion in the mind proceeds, and make a separation between the precious and the vile, that which serveth God, and that which serveth him not, and ye will clearly discern, that the promise is to the one seed, Christ, our light and life; who, as he prevails, bringeth all things into due subjection to himself. Thus shall you be enabled to see into the mystery of redemption by him, who worketh all in all; and to worship the God of the spirits of all flesh, in awful silence, and in the beauty of holiness; and the Lord, the messenger of the covenant, being come to his temple, an holy Sabbath is kept. And as you partake, time after time, of the divine sweet-

ness, you will find your minds engaged to seek a further advancement in wisdom and virtue, and the necessity of daily walking with God, will evidently appear.

We are jealous with a godly jealousy, that many who are favoured with tender visitations from above, relax their care and watchfulness when absent from religious meetings, and thereby slide from under the humbling power of truth, which would preserve in meekness, stability, and holy inward quiet, amidst the various engagements and provocations of this life, and guard the mind against wandering imaginations, irregular desires and affections.

When those who have grieved the Holy Spirit, through inattention thereto, again retire with their brethren to seek the Lord, they find their minds clouded, their thoughts roving, and no true centre or solid peace: hence meetings appear to them heavy and unpleasant; the time of silence seems long and tedious; the eye is out after instrumental help, and instead of trusting in God with all the heart, their dependance is turned upon man. This provokes the Holy One of Israel, who is jealous of his honour, to withhold his favours and blessings from such; and this we fear is one great cause of the loss which many have sustained: For whose recovery, and the restoration of an ancient beauty to the churches every where, we are fervently engaged.

Were the eyes of all truly turned towards the Lord, in humble dependance upon him alone for help, many useful instruments would doubtless be raised to fill up every station in the church with propriety. Then the cause of mourning and complaint would cease, and the repetition of particular advices become less necessary; as the holy unction, being received and rightly attended to, would teach us all things that we ought to believe and practice.

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory both now and for ever.” Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

ISAAC WILSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXXVII—1764.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

We tenderly salute you in the Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down his life, that all might witness redemption through his precious blood, and is now come in spirit and power to those that truly believe in, and look for him, the second time, without sin unto salvation.

In a sense of his continued mercy and kindness renewed to us at this time we have to acquaint you, that the affairs of this meeting have been transacted in much brotherly love and concord.

The account of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, being principally for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount in England, and Wales, to three thousand three hundred and eighty-nine pounds and upwards; and in Ireland, to upwards of one thousand six hundred and eighty-three pounds.

In conformity to the righteous principle we profess, which leads to deny the receiving, as well as the payment of tithes, we have information, that two Friends, in different parts, who are intitled by law to claims of that nature, refuse, as others have heretofore done, to receive them.

The accounts brought in from the several counties, and the epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tortola, give us to understand, that some conviction hath appeared in divers parts since last year; and that a living concern seems to increase among Friends in many places, that all may experience preservation and advancement in the life and wisdom of truth, and that the necessary fence of our christian discipline may be rightly maintained.

We find it our concern at this time, briefly to revive in your remembrance, the Lord's gracious dealings with our predecessors, and the fruits of their obedience, that the careless and indolent may be stirred up, and the faithful encouraged.

When, by the permission of divine providence, about the middle of the last century, these nations were made as a field of blood, and terror and distress filled every corner of the land; the Lord Almighty having secretly wrought, by the spirit of his Son, in the hearts of the people, to prepare them for further manifestations of his light and truth, many where shaken from all earthly dependences, and engaged to look, for succour and support, to that arm of power which made and sustains all things. In this day of general

distress, a cry arose in many minds on this wise; "Lord, who shall shew us any good?" and a longing desire was raised after the way to rest and peace.

High and specious professions of religion and godliness, were often rendered subservient to temporal advantages, and the interests of ambition; and many were crying, "Lo here is Christ, and lo there;" to the turning aside of the feet of the simple, and leading them astray from the alone help.

Wearied in the multitude of professions, and having compassed a mountain in the wilderness, they sat down in sorrow unprofitable, having unavailably sought the living amongst the dead.

In this day of humiliation, anxiety, and godly sorrow, it pleased the Lord to visit many of their souls, by the manifestation of a divine principle in their own minds, which discovered to them their states, and gradually revealed the rock of strength and salvation, on which they might build with security, and obtain durable riches and righteousness, which they had vainly sought in the multiplicity of forms and traditions.

Through the word of his power in their hearts, the Lord begat in them an hunger and thirst after substantial virtue, and raised the language of a life, whereof he is the immediate author, and which ever seeks a food correspondent to its own nature, which is heavenly.

Being, through the light of the day-spring, from on high, made truly sensible wherein all sufficient help and wisdom consisted, and where it was revealed; they were inwardly gathered to wait for, and feel after its holy influence upon their minds, as a lively, powerful manifestation and searcher of the heart, whence they knew it be the light of life; and dividing asunder between the precious and the vile, betwixt the son of the bondwoman, and the son of the free, they also experienced it to be the word of truth.

Under the blessed influence of this most glorious, powerful word, they witnessed victory over their spiritual enemies, and a gradual advancement in the saving knowledge of Christ, as delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification; becoming also, in their experience, the author of eternal salvation, made of God unto them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; and, in them, the hope of glory.

Being thus favoured to partake of the hidden manna from his hand, whom God the Father had sealed as the feeder and shepherd of his flock, they withdrew themselves from the formality of outward profession, which their experience had taught them to be vain and fruitless, and assembled together in his name, to wait for his power who had called them, and to know the fresh renews of that life which was their strength.

Being thus engaged, he who had mercifully regarded them in the day of their distress, when they cried to him in the bitterness of their captivity, graciously extended the joy of his salvation to their souls; having brought them out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, he set their feet upon a rock, he established their goings, and put a new song into their mouths.

This heavenly virtue of the word of eternal life, thus wrought so the sanctification of individuals, and prepared many of them, as chosen vessels, to bear the Lord's name, and publish, from living experience, the power and all-sufficiency of that truth, in which they had most surely believed. They were sent forth, in the demonstration of the spirit and with power, to call to others who were asking the way to Zion; to preach good tidings to the meek; to bind up the broken hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound. Thousands who were waiting for the consolation of the Israel of God, heard and received the glad tidings of the gospel, and were, through their effectual ministry, turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

Not only to the poor, the humbled inquirer, was the visitation of heaven extended; but it became also a day of the trumpet, and of the alarm against the strong towers and fenced cities of many, who at first despised the simplicity of a message they could not comprehend in their natural wisdom. The principle tendency of their ministry, was to gather the minds of mankind into an inward dependence upon, and feeling after the quickening spirit, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, that they might thereby receive power to become the sons of God, serve him in newness of life, and worship him in the beauty of holiness.

Under this engagement of mind they assembled together in solemn silence, to wait for the manifestation of divine light and life, which often was gloriously revealed to their inexpressible joy, the enlargement of their number, and their support under the trials of a stormy day of grievous persecution, which was raised against them on account of the exercise of a good conscience towards God, and for assembling to worship him in spirit and truth.

With abundant evidence, that they had not followed cunningly devised fables, but in the holy certainty of the power and prevalence of this ever blessed gift, our worthy ancestors in the truth finished their course, having overcome through sufferings, and died in the Lord.

It hath pleased him, whose cause these worthy instruments were concerned to promote in their day, to raise up a succeeding generation to testify, from experience, to his saving powerful truth,

by which our forefathers were supported ; and a remnant are made living witnesses of the virtue and sufficiency thereof.

As many whom the Lord our God hath called by his grace, who through the obedience of faith have been brought to fellowship and communion with us, have been made to eat of this spiritual bread, and drink of the same fountain which is opened for sanctification and refreshment.

Dearly beloved Friends, descendants of an highly favoured and faithful people, we find it weightily upon us to revive in your minds, and on those who by conviction have been brought into communion with us ; what it was by which we were raised up to be a people, and have hitherto been preserved ; even the inward manifestation of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ for effectual redemption : the stay, strength, and succour of the true christian ; the foundation God hath laid for all ages to build upon, as a rock against which the gates of hell can never prevail.

The immediate extendings of power and wisdom from on high ; the instrumental ministry established by the master of our assemblies ; the christian labour exercised amongst us in administering line upon line, precept upon precept ; the deep and anxious concern of many amongst us yet preserved alive to God, and zealous for his honour, even travailing as in birth for the formation of Christ in many souls, are all united to recommend and enforce this principal object, that we may be gathered to God, and to the word of his grace, spiritually revealed as the bruise of the head of the serpent, a light to enlighten, a saving help to deliver, and unchangeable truth to direct, in our pilgrimage through this life, to an everlasting rest in glory.

Having thus briefly reminded you, by what means and for what end we were first raised up to be a people, we earnestly recommend it to your serious attention, and beseech you, beloved Friends, to dwell near to the word of life, by which you will be enabled to adorn the gospel of Christ, and to shew forth his salvation to those in whom an inquiry after the way to the kingdom is raised ; thus the necessity of more particular advices may be prevented, and by and through you, the testimony of the everlasting gospel be exalted to the honour of God, and the spreading of his saving health to others ; that walking in his pure wisdom, you may shine as the brightness of the firmament, and having been instrumental to turn many to righteousness, as stars for ever and ever.

Signed in and on behalf, of the Yearly Meeting, by
JOHN FOTHERGILL,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXXVIII—1765.

Dear and well beloved Friends and Brethren,

We have repeated cause, in humble thankfulness to the God and Father of all our mercies, to acknowledge the continuation of his gracious regard to us, in this our large assembly; by the fresh manifestation whereof, we have been comforted, united, and enabled to transact the affairs before us, in the love of the gospel; wherein we tenderly and affectionately salute you.

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales, brought in this year, being principally for tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven pounds and upwards; and those from Ireland, one thousand five hundred and ninety-two pounds and upwards.

By accounts received this year, from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, New-York, and Long-Island, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, South-Carolina, and Barbadoes, we are informed, that some convinced persons have joined our religious community, in divers places; and that, notwithstanding the apparent declension of many, a godly concern remains amongst the churches in general, for the support of good order, upright walking, and the promotion of purity and virtue.

Happy would it be, was this the principle engagement of all amongst us; but alas, we have too much cause to lament the state of those who, resting under the shadow of profession, seem regardless of their real happiness, the prosperity of the church, or the honour of God, who created them for a purpose of his own glory.

Many are the objects of our solemn and affectionate counsel and advice at this time; but nothing claims our earnest attention at present, more than the deficiency that appears, in that essential duty of meeting at the times set apart for the worship of Almighty God, on the Week-days especially.

It is matter of much concern, that some in profession with us, are scarcely ever seen at those meetings; others but seldom, and too many, who cannot in general plead cases of absolute necessity, or insurmountable obstacles, are far from giving timely and constant attendance: hence those meetings are often tedious in gathering, and appear disreputably small when assembled; whereby instead of being helps and encouragements to such as have their eyes upon us for good, they are frequently rendered occasions of stumbling to them.

To what is this obvious deficiency to be imputed? Is it to the want of numbers sufficient to support our meetings with reputation and to advantage? In many places this is by no means the case; the multitudes which assemble on particular occasions demonstrate the contrary. If we look honestly for the true cause, shall we not find it in our own breasts? Have not many entertained a lukewarm spirit, a coolness of heart towards religious exercise, instead of that fervency of love, that ardency of concern for their own growth, and for the good of all, which were so conspicuous in our faithful predecessors?

The due and constant support of their public assemblies appeared to them of such consequence, that neither the severity of human laws, the violence of misled magistrates, nor the insults of an ignorant unthinking populace, could deter them from meeting together, at their usual times and places, for the maintenance of their christian testimony. And now, it hath pleased divine Providence to favour us with the removal of those cruel obstructions, is it less than an ungrateful abuse of such mercy and goodness, for any of us to suffer the ensnaring profits, the vain delights, the flattering friendships of a delusive world, or an indolent disposition of mind, to deprive us of these opportunities of improvement in things of eternal importance? It is not enough for us, to meet in order for public worship, when we find little or nothing else to do. The Lord Almighty requires the first fruits, the prime of our service, and will not accept the refuse, either of our time or talents. If we prefer worldly pursuits, or idle amusements, at such times when we ought to be solemnly engaged in this great duty, may it not justly be said, that "we follow after lying vanities, and forsake our own mercies?" "Where two or three," saith our Lord, "are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* In these words he, by implication, invites us, not only to meet one with another, but in so doing, with himself also. Shall the king of kings and Lord of Lords, condescend to offer his divine presence for our good, and shall we, his dependent creatures, set so light by his inestimable kindness, as, either wilfully or negligently, to let slip those precious seasons wherein we might receive his blessed assistance, so necessary to our help and salvation?

Shall the poor perishing gratifications of sense and self-love, or any inconveniences of a trivial nature, be suffered to prevent our dutiful attendance upon him, in whom alone stands our everlasting interest? Shall a cloudy sky, a little wet, a little cold, a little ease to the flesh, a view to a little earthly gain, or any common

* MAT. xviii. 20.

incident, furnish an excuse for declining this duty, and thereby depriving ourselves of the blessed advantage, often vouchsafed to the faithful, of enjoying heavenly communion together in spirit, with the Lord of life and glory ?

Vain diversions and carnal indulgences are very dangerous. Every repetition adds weakness to weakness ; a languid indifference ensues ; a disinclination to duty ; the desire after heavenly things becomes gradually enfeebled, and in time may be utterly extinguished. Let every one therefore, in whom such injurious deceptions have prevailed, be roused and awakened ; lest continuing therein, the Lord, whose Spirit will not always strive with the disobedient, should withhold the renewals of his gracious visitations from them, and leave them to rest in their beds of ease, till they sleep the sleep of death.

Much of the remisness abovementioned hath appeared in some heads of families, upon whom it is undoubtedly incumbent so to order their affairs, if possible, that they may not interfere with their meetings ; and not only to be exemplary in attending themselves, but also to make way for their children and servants, as much as may be. It is therefore earnestly desired, that a zealous care may take place in such, faithfully to discharge the trust committed to them.

The portion of time allotted us in this life is daily diminishing ; the most awful period approaching towards us with unavoidable certainty ; and it is altogether unknown to us, how soon, and how suddenly it may surprize us : it therefore highly behoves all, to make a right improvement of every opportunity in mercy afforded.

Let us not think lightly of that just regard due from every individual, to the salutary advices and establishments of the society we profess ourselves members of, nor suffer the repeated exhortations and intreaties of concerned brethren and sisters to pass by us without impression. The mercies bestowed upon us must be accounted for ; and the manner in which we treat them, will be of consequence to us, not only in time, but also in eternity. The sentence of well done, cannot be expected by those who omit what they ought to do ; nor the appellation of good and faithful servants, by those who are negligent in the practice of their known duty.

May every one of us be prevailed upon, for the honour of that great name we take upon us, for the sake of our own souls, and for the reputation of those Particular Meetings we are immediately connected with, as well as that of the society in general, to endeavour zealously to come up in our respective duties, and to animate each other, both by word, and practice, to a diligent

attendance of our Week-day and First-day meetings. Let us also be careful to assemble in due time and manner, that the service of our meetings may not be interrupted through our dilatory coming, nor the solemnity of them injured, either by giving way to a light wandering mind, or by indulging a drowsy disposition; which is greatly burdensome to the living, and scandalous in the view of all.

And that we may have the true benefit of our meetings, which is to witness the Lord's power to arise in our hearts, to the refreshing of our spirits, and invigorating us to make advances in the necessary work of regeneration, which leads to the kingdom, let us abide under the holy yoke of Christ, by which the mind is kept inward out of meetings, and preserved in a state of preparation for worship in them. Suffering the mind to wander when about our ordinary affairs, introduces, and accustoms it to such an habit of roving, that it has not power to recollect itself in meetings, and to retire in that singleness and fervency, which is essential to true spiritual worship. And when we sit down in our religious assemblies, let a weighty sense of our own frailty and necessity, and of the greatness and goodness of God, engage us to approach him in spirit with the most humble reverence; watching to the light, and turning away from every thought and imagination, as they arise, which have the least tendency to divert our minds from simplicity of desire after the Father of Spirits, and fountain of all good. Thus pressing forward in spirit, and persevering therein, we shall, in due time, feel the strength of his life, and the comforts of his love, which doth enable the quickened and freely resigned soul to acknowledge, "The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him."*

Let us therefore, according to the apostolic exhortation, "Consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."†

Another point of duty, we find in our minds to press upon all at this time is, that you be frequently conversant with the Holy Scriptures, by the good providence of God preserved down to our time, which contain the most excellent declarations of his love to men, our duty to him, and one to another, and most certainly, through faith in Christ Jesus, tend to our instruction in righteousness. As your minds come into an humble teachable frame secretly breathing after divine information and guidance, you will often experience the comforter, the spirit of truth, to open the

* LAM. iii. 25.

† HEB. x. 24, 25.

doctrines of Christ, and of his primitive servants unto you. Hence shall ye be instructed, to “let your light so shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”* If you abide under this holy teaching, you will not fail to know your practice brought into conformity thereto, so as truly to be enabled, to “shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light.”†

And, dear Friends; as our union and fellowship stands in the divine light, let us give all diligence continually to walk in it. Herein we shall feel the powerful sustaining influence of the life of the Son of God. By this we shall discover the wiles of Satan, the common enemy to our happiness, and be enabled to guard against every appearance of evil in ourselves, and against every thing, though ever so specious in outward appearance, tending to break in upon that near and dear affection which the flock and family of God dwell in, who are concerned to abide in the light, according to that evangelical observation, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”‡ Therefore, brethren, “See that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”§

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN GURNEY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE LXXXIX—1766.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

We have renewed cause, in deep reverence and thankfulness to the God of all grace, the Father and fountain of mercies, to acknowledge the continuation of his goodness to us, throughout several sittings of this our annual assembly, instituted for the promotion of piety and virtue and the preservation of peace and order; wherein brotherly love and christian condescension have eminently prevailed, to our comfort and edification.

With hearts united in the love of the gospel, we tenderly salute you, and hereby signify, that, by accounts received from

* MAT. v. 16. † 1 PET. ii. 9. ‡ 1 JOHN i. 17. § 1 PET. i. 22, 23.

the Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, New-York and Long-Island, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Virginia and North-Carolina, we have acceptable information of the continuance of christian love and unity in the general. Happy would it be, was it the constant, invariable engagement of every individual, diligently to follow those things that make for peace and concord. The Lord our God is one: he hath called us to be baptized by one Spirit into one body; and this will render us one in faith, in charity, in principle, and in practice.

The amount of Friends' sufferings, brought in this year, from the several counties in England, and from Wales, is three thousand five hundred and ten pounds and upwards; and those from Ireland, one thousand five hundred and forty-three pounds and upwards, being principally for tithes, and those called church-rates.

And, dear Friends; we think it seasonable to remind you, that it hath ever been our principle to yield obedience to magistrates in all things not inconsistent with our religious duty; making "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." These remain to be the duty of christians every where, and have always been our practice, even in the time of deepest sufferings: we therefore strongly desire, that Friends in all places may continue faithfully to support this our ancient principle; the violation whereof would be in us both unchristian and ungrateful.

The doctrine of the cross of Christ, and the necessity of coming under the power thereof, has been constantly held forth amongst us, ever since we have been distinguished as a religious society; and we in an especial manner press it at this time, that we may not only have it in profession, but that all may truly witness a being inwardly crucified to the world, and the world to them; that during the time of their sojourning here, they may be preserved from the evils that abound therein.

It is exceedingly afflicting to those who, through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, have escaped the corruptions that are in the world, and who have known the terrors of the Lord for sin, to see their fellow creatures carried away with the love of those things which are not of the Father, but of the world. Sensuality in a high degree, evidently prevails amongst the professors of the christian name, who take liberty to indulge themselves in pride, luxury, and avarice, and in many other evil and hurtful things: the reins of the mind being thus let loose, it knoweth no bounds,

the eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. But, dear Friends, there is a state abundantly better, happier, and safer, to be attained, which the goodness of God hath made our duty to seek after, and which is inexpressibly desirable to all who willingly deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow the Lord Jesus in the regeneration.

And we intreat all parents seriously to lay to heart, the great and lasting importance of a religious education to their offspring; and to be more solicitous that their tender minds may be impressed with virtuous principles, and early directed into the path of purity, by which they may obtain the pearl of great price, than to provide for them superfluous and uncertain riches, frequently the sorrowful means of their declension and ruin. And let your good precepts be enforced by a prudent restraint and authority, discouraging in them every appearance of evil. And to all masters and tutors of children, we affectionately address ourselves, that in a particular manner it may be your care to caution, and as much as in you lies, to guard the youth committed to your charge, against the dangers and allurements of evil communications, and the reading of profane and immoral writings, those powerful engines of Satan, whether they be such as directly tend to defile the affections, or with a more specious appearance, to subvert the doctrines of christianity by a presumptuous abuse of human reason, and by vain and subtle disputations, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

As it appears from the accounts brought to this meeting, that the great and gracious shepherd is at work in many places, to draw the minds of the people from the barren mountains of empty profession, and is raising in their hearts living desires, after that substantial good which alone can nourish the soul to eternal life, and giving to many who have wandered in uncertainty, vanity and sorrow, the like joyful experience with that of the royal Psalmist, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."* Let it be a mean to awaken greater care and zeal in us, with vigilance and deep attention, to feel after the enlivening, strengthening influence of that holy, powerful principle we have professed, and unto which is the resort, and in which are the resources of the strength and wisdom of all whom the Lord our God hath called; that we may be made truly sensible of our great and incumbent duty, of being as way-marks and instructors to those who are asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward.

Great would be the benefit of each in their own particular experience, was this holy engagement of mind more prevalent; as

* PSAL. xliii. 2.

qualifications would be thereby attained, to become workers together with Christ, to the enlargement of his flock, the advancement of his glorious name and cause, and the lifting up his standard to the nations.

If on the contrary, a lukewarm spirit prevails, and draws from our proper places in the heavenly body; if our minds relax from the pursuit of durable riches and righteousness, and, centering in the pleasures and fading enjoyments of this world, we forget our high and holy vocation; instead of being helpers to the weak, and eyes to the blind, we shall become stumbling-blocks in the way, and an obstruction to the progress of that glorious reformation, which is the Lord's work in the earth.

Let such therefore be excited to diligence, who may have satisfied themselves with a profession of the principles of truth, and a name amongst men, without the effectual operation of that spirit and power, which redeems from the dominion of sin and death.

Our spirits worship, in deep reverence before the Lord of power and preservation, that, notwithstanding the declension of many from a perfect following the Lord their God, living praises are amongst us, and a large body remain who have kept their first love; and that amongst the rising generation, there is at work the hand which fashioneth vessels to the Lord's praise. May each of those who have kept their garments clean, be encouraged to persevere, for their own everlasting establishment in righteousness, and the instruction, encouragement, and confirmation of others, whom the Lord our God hath called, to be partakers with us in the like precious faith.

And, dear Friends; in all your meetings for the worship of Almighty God, let an holy reverence possess your spirits before him who is all-seeing, who requires the sacrifice of a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, and is only acceptably worshipped in spirit and in truth. As your minds are inwardly exercised in a spiritual approach to the Father of lights and spirits, you will cease from every human dependence; and the birth of that pure life will gather strength and holy stability, which calls no man master upon earth; but whose master, father, and feeder, is the great and everlasting minister of the sanctuary.

May grace, mercy and peace, be multiplied amongst you; and that the very God of peace may sanctify you wholly, in spirit, soul and body, and preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the fervent supplication of your Friends and brethren.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

WILLIAM FRY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XC—1767.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

Under an humbling sense of divine condescension, and goodness, vouchsafed to us in this our annual assembly, wherein we have been refreshed together, and enabled to transact divers weighty concerns of the church, to our mutual comfort and edification, we tenderly salute you; fervently desiring, that all may become heirs together, and daily partakers of the grace of life, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

By accounts brought from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, Flushing, in the province of New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, North-Carolina, and South-Carolina, we have information that a religious concern for the maintenance of christian brotherhood, the preservation of piety, peace and good order, and the support of our ancient testimony in its several branches, happily subsists; also that great openness, and considerable convincement hath appeared; which hath bowed our hearts in thankfulness to the Father and fountain of all grace, mercy and goodness. Yet, we are sorrowfully affected, in consideration of the unwary scattering and defection, both in spirit and practice, which appears amongst too many professing with us.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in from the several counties in England, and from Wales, being chiefly on account of tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand nine hundred and forty-five pounds and upwards; and those from Ireland, one thousand nine hundred and eleven pounds and upwards.

As divers of those worthy confessors of the Lord Jesus Christ, the protestant martyrs and reformers, were inspired with an upright zeal and concern for the revival of the virtue, life and power of truth, in the hearts of christian professors, and with great integrity and nobility of spirit, began the work of reformation; so we as a people have in the light of truth, found it our place and duty to endeavour, not without success, the carrying of it forward, according to the ability afforded us, to further degrees of purity and perfection.

Thus were our faithful predecessors, and the faithful amongst us now are, concerned to bear testimony, both in doctrine and practice, not only against the numerous innovations and superstitions, invented in the times of apostacy, whereby darkness, in

a great measure, covered the earth, and gross darkness the people; but also against their continuance amongst protestant communities; such as an hired and coercively supported ministry, ceremonial performances in worship, with their various appurtenances. As we cannot join in the practice of these things, neither can we actively contribute towards their support. For as we are plainly assured in the sacred writings, so we firmly believe, that the right qualification for true gospel-ministry is freely given by Christ, and by him the gospel is commanded to be freely administered; acceptable worship being only that which is performed in spirit and in truth.

It is neither from obstinacy, nor as it hath been erroneously alledged by some, from views to self-interest, but purely to preserve a conscience void of offence, by supporting the testimony we believe to be given us of God to bear, that we refuse an active compliance with demands of this kind. And from the same conscientious ground, we are induced patiently to submit, in a spirit of meekness, to the penalties annexed to the refusal by the legislature: we are sensible likewise of the candour with which, of late years especially, we have been generally treated, in the execution thereof, by many both in civil and ecclesiastical offices.

And, dear Friends; we find it necessary to remind you that our worthy ancestors, having their eye directed towards an enduring inheritance, and their affections established upon things above, sought not after greatness in this world, but passed the time of their sojourning here, in fear, and in great simplicity of heart, as well as of outward demeanor, endeavouring thereby to reach the divine witness in every mind, and promote the love of truth and righteousness amongst mankind. In minds thus bent upon seeking a more glorious inheritance than temporals can afford, the love of this world had little influence. They were shining examples of temperance, justice and truth. A defection from this simplicity of heart, and heavenly-mindedness, into the love and pursuit of this fading world, hath obviously prevailed with too many amongst us, and produced the fruits of pride and ambition. These have brought in many wants, which the simplicity and integrity of our ancestors preserved them from. To satisfy these wants, divers have been excited to enter into a larger extension of trade, and commerce, than they had stock and ability to conduct. Vain ambition, and evil emulation have led into higher living, and greater expences than their income would admit. Reduced by these means in their circumstances, yet unwilling to lessen their appearance in the world, they have made use of indirect methods to procure a temporary support, which

have ended in failures and bankruptcies, unknown among us in the days of our temperate and lowly-minded predecessors.

This lamentable defection in some under our name, hath occasioned great reproach, and grievous suffering in the properties of many, almost to the ruin of particulars, who placed more confidence in those on account of the self-denying profession they made to the world.

These causes of affliction have been lately renewed, notwithstanding the many repeated advices, and brotherly exhortations which have been heretofore affectionately communicated. We therefore earnestly beseech and intreat, that a godly care may more and more spread amongst us, early and tenderly to watch over such as may appear to be in danger of miscarriage in their temporal concerns; admonishing the high-minded of the danger of a fall, and using every endeavour to prevent these scandalous and pernicious occasions of sorrow and suffering: and where they break out, that Monthly Meetings fail not to clear our holy profession of the reproach cast upon it, by publickly testifying against such, from whose iniquitous conduct the offence comes.

And, dear Friends; we beseech you, throughout the whole of your conduct towards one another, both as members of our religious community, and in private life, let it be your especial care to keep that excellent Commandment of our Lord inviolable; "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."* Shew forth in the kindness and tenderness of your spirits, that you are under the true and effectual baptism, that of the inward and spiritual grace; wherein alone stands the communion of saints. For, saith the apostle, "by one spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit."† Thus the real members of the church, or body of Christ, are all, less or more, in one spirit, and therefore in unity, having fervent charity towards one another; and by this spirit are preserved in that love which demonstrates the verity of their discipleship: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."‡ Suffer not therefore, brethren, any infringement of brotherly love, nor any root of bitterness to arise, without earnestly and affectionately endeavouring to remove the cause; and be careful timely to prevent the growth of differences in their very first appearance, that all breach of harmony, strife and discord may be kept down, and excluded. And let all detraction or defamation, whispering and tale-bearing, be immediately discountenanced and reprovèd; for, "A whisperer se-

* JOHN xiii. 34. † 1 COR. xii. 13. ‡ JOHN xiii. 35.

“ parateth chief friends, and the words of a tale-bearer are as
“ wounds.”*

We think it seasonable at this time also, to repeat the following advices formerly given, † viz. ‘ It is matter of exceeding grief and concern to the faithful amongst us, to observe how far that exemplary plainness of habit, speech and deportment, which distinguished our forefathers, and for which they patiently underwent the reproach and contradiction of sinners, are now departed from by too many under our name, and who frequent our religious assemblies. A declension from the simplicity of truth herein, hath been, and we fear is, attended with pernicious consequences, in opening the way of some, the more easily and unobserved, to attend the places of public resort for the exercise of sports, plays, and other hurtful and destructive diversions of the age, from which truth taught our faithful elders, and still teaches us to refrain. And indeed, the christian gravity of their lives and actions always carried with it a severe reproof, and manifest opposition to the wantonness and levity of such dangerous and sinful pastimes. Wherefore we beseech you, be not deceived nor led aside by false notions of imaginary pleasures, to partake with the unfruitful works of darkness, but watch and be sober; and, as becometh children of the light and of the day, abstain from every appearance of evil.’

And, dear Friends; as next to our souls, our offspring are the most immediate objects of our care and concern, it is earnestly recommended to all parents and guardians of children, that the most early opportunities may be taken, in their tender years, to impress upon them a sense of the divine being, his wisdom, power, and omnipresence, so as to beget a reverent awe and fear of him in their hearts; and as their capacities enlarge, to acquaint them with the Holy Scriptures, by frequent and diligent reading therein, instructing them in the great love of God to mankind through Jesus Christ, the work of salvation by him, and sanctification through his blessed spirit. For though virtue descendeth not by lineal succession, nor piety by inheritance, yet we trust, the Almighty doth graciously regard the sincere endeavours of those parents, whose early and constant care is over their offspring, for their good; who labour to instruct them in the fear of the Lord, and in an humble waiting for, and feeling after those secret and tender visitations of divine love, which are afforded for the help and direction of all. Be ye therefore excited to a faithful discharge of your duty. Be examples to them in your meetings, your families, and your employments, of a diligent humble watchfulness, and steady regard to that holy principle in yourselves which you

* PROV. XVI. 28. and XXVI. 22. † Epistle 1753.

recommend to their observance. Be careful not to indulge them in any thing of an evil tendency. Keep them while young, out of the vain fashions, the corrupt customs, and unprofitable conversation of the world; training them up in that commendable simplicity and plainness of speech, habit and manners, practised by our Lord, and his faithful followers; and as they ripen in age, guard them against the reading of plays, romances, and other licentious publications, of a nature prejudicial to the promotion of true christianity; likewise against the public pastimes, and pernicious diversions of the age; all which are the inventions of degenerate and corrupt spirits, and strongly tend to draw the incautious mind from a sense of religious duty, to bring it into a state of alienation from the love of God, and to deprive it of that inexpressible comfort and delight which attends the daily exercise of religion and virtue.

In the love of the gospel, we now recommend you to God, and to the word of his grace, earnestly desiring, that the youth may not suffer themselves to be entangled with the allurements of perishing delights, nor those of more advanced years be ensnared by the love of the world, or the deceitfulness of riches; but that all may be impressed with a just sense of the vanity and uncertainty of sublunary enjoyments, and constantly concerned to seek those pleasures which are at God's right hand, and that enduring substance which shall never fade away.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

THOMAS SQUIRE,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XCI—1768.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In the love and fellowship of the gospel, which we have renewed occasion thankfully to acknowledge has been witnessed amongst us both in our meetings for worship, and in those for transacting the important concerns of our religious society, we salute you; humbly beseeching the God and Father of all our mercies, who hath called us by his grace, so to continue his merciful visitations to us, that the scattered may be brought back and restored, the weak strengthened, and the faithful preserved to his praise for ever.

Our meetings have been large and comfortable, and the business thereof conducted in a spirit of love and condescension.

The sufferings of Friends, brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, in England and Wales, amount to three thousand four hundred and sixty-nine pounds and upwards; and those in Ireland to one thousand five hundred and sixty pounds and upwards.

By accounts from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by Epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, and from Maryland, we are advised, that several have joined the society, through conviction, in divers places; and that considerable openness appears in many parts towards the testimony of truth. We fervently desire, that Friends, every where may be weightily concerned to live in that heavenly principle which is manifested in the hearts of all men, that walking according thereunto, every occasion of stumbling may be removed, and we may be way-marks in our conversation and conduct to those who have their eyes upon us, to direct and lead them to Christ, "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."*

And, dear Friends, suffer the word of exhortation! with deep concern of spirit we behold the great hurt, which hath been brought upon our society, from a desire and pursuit after the riches and splendour of this uncertain world; and therefore, in brotherly affection, we intreat those who are intrusted with earthly riches, that it may be the sincere engagement of their hearts, to be good stewards of their temporal possessions, and not use them to the gratification and indulgence of the flesh; but to the glory of God, their own lasting advantage, and the benefit of their fellow creatures.

And, in consideration of the difficulties which the laborious poor have to struggle with, in this time of scarcity, let us impress it, especially upon Friends in affluent circumstances, to submit to a becoming frugality in their manner of living, in order to relieve the wants of the needy of all denominations with a liberal hand, which cannot but be acceptable to the author of our being, who through his servants hath declared, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; and he that hath pity upon the poor; lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again."†

'Tis afflicting to the faithful to observe how pride and high-mindedness abound in many, whereby the way of truth is evil spoken of. We therefore earnestly desire that all parents and heads of families, may seek daily, in humility and fear, after that power which alone is able to preserve us in a life of self-denial,

* JOHN i. 9.

† PSAL. xli. 1. PROV. xix. 17.

and to raise our affections above earthly things, and establish them on durable riches; that the youth may not be misled by wrong example, nor relaxed by indulgences injurious to their progress in religion, but may be enabled to perceive, by the holy zeal of their elders, that they are in good measure redeemed from the world, its gratifications and friendships, which are, and ever were, at enmity with the spirit of God.

We affectionately request the youth amongst us, who are favoured with pious and exemplary parents, to pay all dutiful regard to their instruction and example, and that they be very cautious of bringing grief and dishonour upon them by departing from the safe and commendable simplicity of the truth, the moderation and plainness it leads to, both in dress and address, and in every other part of their conduct and behaviour. "Honour thy father and mother,"* the apostle observes, "is the first commandment with promise." Such therefore who reject the advice of godly parents, and set light by their example and authority, both bring dishonour on their parents, and forfeit their own title to the holy promise of God. We therefore most fervently beseech our rising youth to buy the truth and sell it not, not to fashion themselves after the practice of those who manifestly deviate from the pattern of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his humble self-denying followers, but that they may tread in the footsteps of the flocks of his companions, "become servants to God, and have their fruit unto holiness, that their end may be everlasting life."†

The advice of divine wisdom is, "Buy the truth and sell it not."‡ But those who prefer the gaiety, the vain customs, and fluctuating fashions of this world, renounce wisdom for folly, duty for disobedience, and the reality of enduring substance for the flattering delusion of transitory enjoyments.

Under an afflicting sense of the lukewarmness of many, we treat, that a solemn examination may take place in every individual, whilst the merciful visitation of our heavenly Father's love is continued to them, that they may become truly acquainted with the state of their own souls. You are not insensible, brethren, that mere profession is altogether empty and in vain. Let it therefore be your earnest endeavour, to live in the life of true religion, and effectually to experience the work of regeneration, and perfect conversation of heart unto God; walking before him in a daily exercise of spirit, for the renewal of his divine power upon your minds, by which alone his people are quickened and preserved alive, and enabled to every good word and work. Let close and weighty attention be given to the inspeaking word, and seek after those

* Eph. vi. 2.

† Rom. vi. 22.

‡ Prov. xxiii. 23.

things, which make for eternal peace. Awake from all indifferency of heart in the momentous concerns of eternity: for the time hasteneth, when every pretence and form of religion will prove insufficient: and woe will be the portion of those who seek to cover themselves, and not with the Spirit of the Lord.

And, dear brethren, as it is abundantly evident, that evil communications corrupt good manners, we earnestly exhort all in profession with us, against the unnecessary frequenting of public houses, and those places of resort which are too often used as occasions of intemperance, dissipation, animosity, and the baneful spirit of party; all which manifestly tend to lead away, and alienate the unwary mind from the moderation, peace and purity of true religion, and frequently terminate in the unspeakable hurt of soul, body, and estate.

The great end of divine grace being afforded to us is, that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; and that by attending to its purifying power, we should be rendered a peculiar people, zealous of good works; throughout all our conduct shewing forth the praise of him who hath called us to glory and virtue.

Finally, brethren, let us keep out of the inquietudes, and distractions of this unstable world, and not concern ourselves with them; but to dwell in the Spirit and power of God, which is above all; that we may experience it to be "as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."*

Signed in and on behalf of our Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN HUSTLER,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XCII—1769.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

It calls for our humble and thankful acknowledgment to the Father and fountain of all our mercies, that a manifestation of divine regard has been graciously continued to us at this time, wherein we have been enabled to conduct the affairs of the church in a spirit of love and christian condescension: in a fresh and living sense whereof, we tenderly salute you.

* ISA. xxxii. 2.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year, chiefly on account of tithes and those called church-rates, amount in England and Wales, to three thousand four hundred and thirty-six pounds; and in Ireland to one thousand six hundred and ninety-one pounds.

By accounts from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, and places abroad, we are informed, that a godly concern for the promotion of virtue and holiness, and the support of our christian testimony is generally maintained, and love and unity in a good degree preserved in the churches; that great openness continues in many places, and that the power of truth hath so far prevailed in the hearts of divers, as to induce them to join with us in public profession. Let a constant care rest upon all our spirits, so to order our conversation, that the nobility and excellency of the divine principle of light and grace manifested in the hearts of all men, for their sanctification and redemption, to which we as a people have ever borne public testimony, may be more and more shewn forth to the world by our virtuous lives and conversation.

And in order to this, let us ever keep in mind, that of ourselves we can do nothing to the glory of God, or our own preservation, but as we abide under the immediate guidance of his Holy Spirit, which is near to all, for their instruction, help and comfort. Wait diligently therefore upon God; for they that wait upon him shall renew their strength, and those who trust in him shall never be confounded.

And, dear Friends; as many of you have had the singular advantage of being made early acquainted with this great truth and gospel principle, and have measurably experienced its effects in your hearts, cleave to it firmly, we beseech you, that you may thereby be preserved out of the spirit of the world, and from the many inordinate desires and pursuits it suggests, as well as from the dangers and inquietudes to which they are ever exposed, who anxiously interest themselves in the profits, pleasures, and mutable concerns of this transitory life.

And, though we trust it is unnecessary to remind any amongst us of the duty and affection we owe to the king, who, by divine Providence, is placed in the sovereignty of these dominions; nevertheless we think it incumbent upon us to exhort all Friends, in every place, not only to demean themselves as becomes good and faithful subjects, both in word and conduct, but also to promote the like sentiments of duty and affection among those over whom their influence may extend; and that they avoid being ensnared by the animosities of contending parties, or any thing

unbecoming the stability and uprightness of our profession, and incompatible with the pure and peaceable spirit of our holy head the Lord Jesus Christ.

We think it likewise expedient to advise you, to continue a watchful care over one another, to prevent any among us from dealing with such as are suspected to be guilty of fraudulent practices respecting the revenue; for though we have received very satisfactory accounts of Friends' being generally clear of such misconduct, yet it must be allowed, that those who knowingly contribute to the iniquity, partake in the guilt, and are encouragers of the primary actors, and subject themselves to the charge of dishonesty, by evading the payment of customs and duties, in an equal degree with those who withhold from their neighbours their just rights; since, in proportion to such frauds, the revenue must fall short, and the honest and upright subject be required to pay more than otherwise need be demanded of him.

There having been for many years past, a great circulation of vain, idle, and irreligious books and pamphlets, tending to lead the mind away from sober and serious duty, to infect the inexperienced and unwary, with notions which promote infidelity and corruption, and to alienate their attention from the Spirit of God, under whose influence and holy keeping alone is safety; we earnestly request, that parents and all others who have youth under their tuition, will keep a constant eye over them, and as much as possible guard them against, and prevent them from wasting their precious time upon such unprofitable and pernicious reading; that they inure them to the frequent and diligent reading of the sacred writings, which through divine goodness are afforded to us, for our "instruction in righteousness, and that we, "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have "hope."*

It is matter of concern to us to be informed, that some who formerly fell short of giving full satisfaction to their creditors, now make a similar appearance to, and live in like manner with people of affluent circumstances: we recommend the following paragraph from our epistle of 1759, to the serious attention of such; viz.

' It is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that if any fall
' short of paying their just debts, and a composition is made
' with their creditors to accept of a part, instead of the whole;
' notwithstanding the parties may look upon themselves as legally
' discharged of any obligation to pay the remainder, yet the prin-
' ciple we profess enjoins full satisfaction to be made; if ever the

* 2 TIM. iii. 16. ROM. xv. 4.

‘ debtors are of ability. And in order that such may the better
 ‘ retrieve their circumstances, we exhort to submit to a manner
 ‘ of living in every respect the most conducive to this purpose,
 ‘ and correspondent to the state they are reduced to; it being
 ‘ exceedingly dishonourable for any to live in ostentation and
 ‘ greatness at the expence of others; which is certainly the case,
 ‘ where any part of the debts, due by the law of equity and strict
 ‘ justice remains unpaid. And that Friends, in their Monthly
 ‘ Meetings, be cautious how they admit such whose debts are
 ‘ unsatisfied into full unity, or receive their collections, which
 ‘ cannot properly be deemed of their own.”

We much desire also, that a deep and thankful sense of the divine mercy and goodness may be impressed upon every heart, in consideration of the late plenteous increase, so providentially afforded to the generality of this nation, after a time of scarcity. When we reflect upon the distress of that season, especially to the poor labouring people, and how threatening the prospect appeared for some continuance of time, can we be otherwise than humbly affected with a sense of the divine bounty towards us therein? Let the consideration thereof excite all to walk answerably to the favours received, and let the sovereign kindness that bestowed them, be a pressing inducement to us to make a right and grateful use of them, and by no means, let any take occasion therefrom, to gratify an insensible, an haughty, or a luxurious mind, or to walk in forgetfulness of him from whom every blessing flows. Let us remember the goodness of our universal benefactor, “ who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good,
 “ and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,”* and kindly administer to the necessities of the poor and needy, even to those of the inconsiderate and improvident, whose conduct may not have been such as might recommend them. Then may we with an humble confidence, put up our addresses to the throne of divine grace, for a continuation of these mercies; for, “ Blessed is
 “ he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time
 “ of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive,
 “ and he shall be blessed upon the earth.”†

You are not ignorant, brethren, that the divine principle we profess, is unchangeably one in all, and brings all that obey it into one way, the way of humility, purity, truth and righteousness. It doth not lead one faithful follower in contradiction to another faithful follower thereof. It is ever consistent in itself, and leads all who are led by it into consistency one with another. Such as act in opposition to those who are led by it, manifest they are led by something else, and not by the spirit of truth;

* MAT. v. 45.

† PSAL. xli. 1, 2.

therefore those who walk in the light of truth cannot have unity with the conduct of such. Their own carnal wills, passions, prejudices, interests and connexions, bias their minds, and eclipse the light of truth unto them. Hence they erroneously wander into by-ways and crooked paths to their own great hurt, and the exercise of those who, abiding in the light, behold their mistake and the danger they are in. Let all therefore be admonished, as they regard their own felicity, the peace and order of the church, and the prosperity of this heavenly principle amongst men, to lay aside all self-will, high conceit, and forwardness of spirit, and to come down into humility and resignation, that they may be fitted to "receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul."*

Finally brethren, may the power and peace of God rule in all your hearts, and engage every one to an humble walking before him, and in fervent supplication and travail of soul, each for himself, that you "may grow up into him in all things, who is the head even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love."†

Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf, of the Yearly Meeting, by
JEREMIAH WARING,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XCIII—1770.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

Under an awful sense of the renewal of divine love in this our annual assembly, both in our Meetings for worship, and those for transacting the weighty concerns of the church, we affectionately salute you, earnestly desiring your preservation, and increase in righteousness and true godliness, through the effectual operation of the Spirit and power of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We have great cause thankfully to acknowledge, the continuation of divine goodness towards us throughout the several sittings of this large and solemn meeting; wherein the affairs brought

* JAMES i. 21.

† EPH. iv. 15, 16.

before us, have been conducted in much brotherly love and condescension, to our mutual help and edification.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in from the several counties in England, and from Wales, principally on account of tithes and those called church-rates, is three thousand six hundred and forty three pounds: and those from Ireland one thousand six hundred and ninety-nine pounds.

The accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and the epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, and various parts of America, afford comfortable information of a godly concern being continued in the churches, for the advancement of truth, and the preservation of Friends therein, and that, through the merciful visitation of divine providence, great openness appears amongst the people to hear the testimony of truth, and divers have been added to the church, by conviction since last year. We fervently desire, that all who have had their education amongst us, may be prevailed upon, whilst the day of mercy, and the renewed offers of divine grace are continued to them, to look well to their own standing; for the sandy foundation of traditional profession will not abide, nor support what is built upon it, in the day of trial. "Another foundation can no man lay; than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* "This is the foundation of God which standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."†

Great and manifold have been the tender visitations of divine love to us as a people, and frequent the earnest and wholesome advices communicated from this meeting; yet it is too obvious, there is a want of coming up in the footsteps of the flocks of Christ's companions, who through all generation walked in holy fear, circumspection, humility, exemplariness of life and conversation, and in that living upright zeal for the cause of God, and the promotion of his truth in the hearts of mankind, which renders those in whom it prevails as lights in the world, and as a city set on an hill, which cannot be hid. Such are daily concerned to avoid all false liberty, and sinful ease in the flesh, and to walk in the simplicity of the truth, and the purity of the gospel.

And, dear Friends; where the signs of defection from the holy commandment appear, it cannot be justly imputed either to the want of conviction, or the means of restoration being withheld; but to a deficiency in attending to the divine principle manifested in every conscience. For the "Manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal."‡ The way to profit by it, is often diligently to retire unto it. As it appears inwardly, it calls for an inward retirement, and an abstraction from earthly

1 * Cor. iii. 11, † 2 Tim. ii. 19. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 7.

objects, imaginations, and attachments. For in the silence of all that is of the flesh, the still small voice of the truth, the divine word nigh in the heart, is heard ; and by hearing, with due observance, true faith is produced. "For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by Christ, the word of God." He is the author, as well as the finisher of the true christian's faith; the faith of the operation of God, which works by love, to the purifying of the heart, and overcoming of the world. This engages to frequent waiting in stilness upon the Lord, for the renewal of strength. This keeps the mind at home, in its own proper place and duty, and out of all unprofitable association and converse, whether amongst those of our own, or other professions. Much hurt may accrue to the religious mind by long and frequent conversation upon temporal matters, and especially by interesting ourselves too much in them; for there is a leaven therein, which being suffered to prevail, indisposes and benumbs the soul, and prevents its frequent ascending in living aspiration towards the fountain of eternal life.

If we suffer our minds to wander from the pure and holy witness of truth, that is placed in every heart, we slide insensibly into the spirit of the world, and the corrupt manners and practices thereof. Hence proceed those light and airy appearances, fantastic dresses, unsound language, unprofitable converse, and inconsistent conduct : which too plainly denote a lamentable declension. "Lord," saith the man of God, "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations!"* He hath indeed ever been the habitation of the righteous, who seek daily for the renewed influence of the spirit and power of God ; in which is the safety and preservation of his people.

And, dear Friends ; let it be weightily considered, that whatever the Lord requires ought to be observed, in small things as well as great. 'Tis no light matter to disobey him in the least of his requiremets. It will be a sure obstacle to our religious progress ; for, if the day, or dispensation of small things be despised and rejected, great things will not be obtained. Those only who are faithful in the little, shall receive more ; those that continue to do the will of God shall know of his doctrine, and be further illuminated, enlarged, and brought to experience his great salvation.

May every soul that is sincerely concerned for its own eternal welfare, be encouraged to persevere unto an establishment in truth in righteousness; and may the negligent, who, like the foolish virgins, have slept as on beds of ease, be awakened to a serious consideration of their state and danger. Lukewarmness

* PSAL. XC. 1.

in religion, and indifference towards worship, are manifest indications that the true love of God is either totally wanting, or much neglected. In waiting upon the Lord, strength is renewed; and by a disregard of this great duty, or a coolness and relaxation of spirit therein, weakness and indisposition increase, drowsiness overtakes, and the mind becomes in time, like the heath in the desert, that knoweth not when good cometh. Therefore be not backward to attend, nor late in coming to your meetings, nor sit therein under an indolent disposition of mind, waiting for words, and depending upon others, but seek, in spirit and truth, to worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of water. Under a diligent care to attend meetings for worship, and a right exercise therein, the power of truth is felt, the soul is refreshed and seasoned, and strength experienced, by which we are enabled to come up in a faithful discharge of the several duties of our stations, both towards God and man.

And, dear Friends; let us not only be concerned each one for our own particulars, but also for mankind in general. Let us be earnest with the God of infinite compassion, that he may vouchsafe to open the blind eyes, and unstop the deaf ears of men, to their best and most lasting interest, bend their minds to christian humility, and dispose them to the blessed unity and harmony of the gospel, which breathes glory to God on high, peace on earth, and good will to men.

Let the peace of God rule in all your hearts. This will preserve you in peace amongst yourselves, and engage you, as much as in you lies, to follow peace with all men. "May the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever."* Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

HENRY GURNEY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XCIV—1771.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

Under a thankful sense of the divine power and goodness, which hath been graciously extended to us in this our solemn

* HEB. kiii. 20, 21.

assembly, held for the support of good order, the preservation of unity, and the promotion of equity, piety and charity, throughout all the churches, we affectionately salute you; and acquaint you, that we have been enabled to conduct the affairs before us in peace and concord, to our mutual consolation.

It appears from accounts brought in this year, that the sufferings of Friends, chiefly for tithes and those called church-rates, in England and Wales, amount to three thousand three hundred and eighty-nine pounds; and in Ireland, to one thousand seven hundred and thirty-six pounds.

And as we are fully persuaded that the ministry of the gospel is not received of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, according to that apostolical direction, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God: If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified:"* and as this ministry is divine, the motives and inducements thereunto are perfectly disinterested, and no way mercenary and lucrative, but concurrent with the precept Christ gave to his apostles and immediate followers, "Freely ye have received, freely give:"

A ministry acting contrary to the unalterable precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is the head of his church, may justly be deemed Antichristian, and the oppressive burden of their support an Antichristian yoke. And being persuaded that we ought not actively to support, by our voluntary contribution, a ministry which we believe to be upon a different foundation from that which God hath laid by Christ Jesus; we earnestly entreat all Friends to maintain our testimony to his doctrine and ministry steadily and uprightly, yet with the patience and meekness becoming his followers; that by the consistency of our practice we may answer the pressing advices of the apostle, "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."†

The advices received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales, North-Britain, Holland, and the colonies, import, that notwithstanding some occasions of sorrow have appeared, yet a considerable number have been added to the church, who have come in by conviction, since last year, and that a

* 1 PET. iv. 10, 11.

† 1 COR. i. 10, PHIL. iii. 16.

godly care is generally maintained for the promotion of truth, and the preservation of love and unity.

Notwithstanding the many weighty cautions, and wholesome advices given forth against all injurious and disreputable conduct in trade and business, divers instances of scandalous failures have of late appeared amongst some in profession with us; the consideration of which, hath brought a fresh concern upon the minds of Friends, to warn all against a most pernicious practice, too much prevailing amongst the trading part of mankind, which hath often issued in the utter ruin of those concerned therein, viz. that of raising and circulating a fictitious kind of paper credit, with endorsements and acceptances, to give it an appearance of value without an intrinsic reality: a practice highly unbecoming that uprightness which ought to appear in every member of our religious society, and of which therefore we think it our incumbent duty to declare our disapprobation, and disunity therewith, as absolutely inconsistent with that truth we make profession of. We are also engaged to caution every individual, against imprudently entering into joint securities with others. For by these practices, many innocent wives and children have been inevitably and unexpectedly involved in ruinous and deplorable circumstances. We therefore earnestly desire Friends to keep strictly on their guard, that none, through any specious pretences of rendering acts of friendship to others with safety to themselves, may risque their own peace and reputation, and the security of their families: in order hereunto, we recommend this salutary advice of the wise man to their especial notice and regard. "Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?"*

And, dear young Friends; we fervently and affectionately entreat you, keep your hearts with all diligence. Guard against every act of unfaithfulness to the divine witness, and especially beware of closing in with the first temptations thereunto. Keep within the bounds of known duty, and the tender restrictions of truth. In this state of vigilance and humble care; preservation, peace and safety will accompany your steps. Your minds, being circumscribed within the bounds of truth and righteousness, will be properly exercised in your respective duties, in the sight of God and man, and employed usefully in your several vocations, abhorring idleness, for of idleness springs folly; vice ensues; dishonour, wretchedness, and ruin are its fruits, which bring affliction on families, and undeserved reproach on our holy profession. Keep close therefore to the heavenly principle in your-

* Prov. xxii. 26, 27.

selves. This will preserve your feet from evil. Shun all those who would lead you into the broad way, as your most dangerous enemies. Deviate not from the strait and narrow path which leads to life, into the pernicious amusements, and ensnaring vanities of a licentious age. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, in the too much neglected cause of morality and religion. Endeavour to put on strength in the name of the Lord, to stop, if possible, the torrent of vice and profaneness, which, with violence and impetuosity, seems to deluge this highly favoured nation, and break through the obligations and ties of laws human and divine.

We beseech you, by the mercies of God, by all that is dear and near to you in every relation, domestic, social and religious, to stand fast in the faith, in purity, in all manner of godly conversation, that you may be happily instrumental in awakening many to proper consideration, and to intercede with the God of all grace, for mercy and forbearance to a wicked and adulterous generation, wherein too many appear to make a boast of their impiety, and glory in their shame: "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."*

Dear brethren, let the peace of God rule in your hearts, that you may be preserved out of all enmity, strife, and party; which arise not from the spirit of the prince of peace, but are the fruits of the flesh, in the corrupt and carnal will of man. Live in love, and unite with one accord, as you feel ability, in "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."†

And, dear Friends; you who have happily received a clear conviction of the heavenly principle of truth in your hearts, and are joined in external fellowship with the inward and experienced people of God; sit not down at ease therein, nor take up with any false or polluted rest by the way. Press earnestly forward, towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Labour to attain a growth in the virtue and simplicity of his truth. Seek to be sanctified wholly, throughout body, soul and spirit; that you may no longer live to yourselves, but unto him "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."‡

* 2 COR. vi. 17, 18.

† 1 TIM. i. 1, 2.

‡ TITUS ii. 14.

We also find, brethren, that the spring of divine love and mercy reaches forth towards the very hindermost of the flock, the most distant of the visited of our God, who have long wandered from the Father's house, and have too long spent the portions of time and talents afforded them, in pursuit of the delusive pleasures or momentary acquisitions of a transitory world. We beseech you, whilst time is afforded, and the door of mercy stands open, turn your eyes towards him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; that by his light ye may discover the delusion of insnaring folly, feel your own captivity, and cry for deliverance. Let the most humble contrition take place in you, and seek earnestly to be baptized by the one Spirit into the one body, which brings to the communion of the bread of life, and the new wine of the kingdom. Herein is true fellowship witnessed with the holy head, Christ Jesus, and with his people, whose daily concern is, to follow him in the regeneration: "For, in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."*

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

WILLIAM FRY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XCV—1772.

Dearlly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In a thankful sense of that divine goodness, which we have experienced to be again renewed to us, in this our large and solemn assembly, held for the promotion of virtue and godliness in life and practice, and the preservation of good order, peace and unity, throughout the churches, we tenderly salute you; and give you to understand, that the affairs before us have been conducted in much love and condescension, to our mutual comfort and edification.

The accounts brought from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and the epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, and the American colonies, afford us comfortable information, that love and concord generally subsist; that a lively concern prevails in many for the support of our wholesome dis-

* GAL. vi. 15, 16.

discipline, and the advancement of truth and righteousness; and that divers have been added to the church by conviction. It likewise appears, that the practice of holding negroes in oppressive and unnatural bondage, hath been so successfully discouraged, by Friends in some of the colonies, as to be considerably lessened. We cannot but approve of these salutary endeavours, and earnestly entreat, they may be continued, that, through the favour of divine providence, a traffick so unmerciful and unjust in its nature, to a part of our own species, made equally with ourselves for immortality, may come to be considered by all in its proper light; and be utterly abolished, as a reproach to the christian profession.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in from the several counties in England, and from Wales, principally on account of tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand five hundred and twenty-six pounds; and those from Ireland, one thousand four hundred and seventy-nine pounds.

Seeing we verily believe, that the spirit of truth hath led us to bear a conscientious testimony against the receiving of tithes, when any of us have, by inappropriate inheritances, been entitled by law to demand them, as well as to refuse the payment of them when demanded of us; lest we should actively contribute to the support of a ministry not according to the doctrine of Christ, it appears to us incumbent upon all in profession with us, faithfully to uphold this important testimony; and we recommend it to those Monthly Meetings, who find any of their members in a contrary practice, that with a becoming zeal, and in the meekness of wisdom they exert their christian endeavours, sufficiently to inform and admonish them; that they may be brought to such a right and proper sense of their remissness, as may engage them to stand clear in future, both of open and collusive compliances, in a point so opposite to the dispensation of a free gospel ministry.

And, dear brethren; it is our earnest desire, that the love and life of truth may be so deeply rooted in every heart, that our christian testimony may be faithfully maintained in all its branches. You are not unacquainted what the principle is, which many of our ancestors laboured in, and suffered for, with an upright and disinterested zeal, for the glory of God, and the good of their fellow creatures, and which ever since we have been a people distinguished from others, we have held forth to the world. It is the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; the sure foundation which God hath laid in Sion, and another foundation can no man lay. Let it be every one's care individually to build upon it, and closely to examine what they build. For, saith the apostle, "If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood,

“ hay, stubble ; every man’s work shall be made manifest ; for
 “ the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and
 “ the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is.”*

Great ought to be the concern of every mind, daily to seek and press after a renewed sense of this fundamental principle, and so to cleave to it, as to obtain an abiding therein ; for in that is our help and salvation. A declension from this, hath opened a door for the enemy to enter and make great inroads amongst the unwatchful. When he is suffered to catch the good seed out of the heart ; or, in other words, when the mind is led away from due attention thereto, it is drawn almost insensibly into the bondage of corruption, and those who are so overcome, are too often made use of, by the envier of our happiness, to insnare others to their destruction. Thus the comparatively innocent, through the conversation and conduct of unsuspected acquaintance, or associates are often prevailed upon, to their hurt, and by imbibing their notions, and being leavened into their spirit, they become indisposed to their duty, gradually darkened with respect to a right sense of it, and easily slide into the dangerous and destructive friendships, follies, and pleasures of a dissipated world. We therefore fervently desire to impress it upon all who are intrusted with the care of youth, that they be especially vigilant and cautious in their own conversation and conduct, both before, and towards them. Keep to the power of truth in your hearts, and the bridle of truth will be upon your tongues, and upon all your ways. Then will a true concern possess your souls, to nurture them in sobriety, modesty, and the fear of the Lord ; and to furnish them with useful and commendable employments ; and prevent them from spending the precious time afforded for better purposes, in amusing themselves with the pernicious works of stage authors, and romances ; which strongly tend to excite irregular passions, and to introduce them into the giddy pursuits, and pollutions of a degenerate age ; which, in a little time, must terminate in disappointment and great distress.

Renewedly sensible of the gracious extension of divine regard towards our youth, we affectionately exhort the rising generation to “ dwell in the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom ;” recommending at the same time the solemn paternal injunction of the royal psalmist to their serious consideration ; “ And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind : If thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”† And in a particular manner we entreat

* 1 COR. iii. 12, 13. † 1 CHRON. xxviii. 9.

such, whose tender minds are sensible of the holy influence of the day-spring from on high, to close in with the visitation of our heavenly Father's love, and walk in all humility and reverence before him ; so will they grow in wisdom and strength, advance from one degree of grace to another, and be enabled to come up in the footsteps of those who are removed from works to rewards.

And, dear Friends ; we beseech you, depend not upon the labours and services of others, but diligently and daily wait in private, as well as in your public assemblies, for the renewal of divine strength in your own hearts. Prize such opportunities as inestimable mercies, and guard against every insnaring entanglement, or a disposition that would lead to carelessness or indifference ; for God is not mocked ; nor can you be profited if dulness or heaviness be suffered to prevail. Keep strictly to the time appointed, and patiently wait, that you may be favoured with a renewed sense of the heavenly presence of the minister of the sanctuary, the great master of our assemblies.

Self-indulgence, either in matters of temporal interest, the carnal gratifications of sense, or lukewarmness respecting religion, is a state of false security, and great danger. Life is short, and judgment certain ; let the indolent, therefore, be awakened to an inward search, and just inspection of their own conditions, by an immediate application to the light of truth in their own hearts. Such as every man sows, he must reap. " If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* We ought to be as lights in the world, but unless we walk in the light ourselves, we cannot be as lights unto others. Except we abide in the way to Sion, we cannot be way-marks towards it.

Finally, brethren, we fervently desire, that you who are, in any measure, favoured with a living sense of the redeeming and saving power of God, may so prize his great goodness, and tender mercies, as faithfully to abide under the sense thereof. Be quiet in your own spirits, inoffensive in conversation, and exemplary in conduct ; ever watchful to prevent the rise, and stop the progress of whatever hath a tendency to contention and discord, or is inconsistent with inward peace, the honour of truth, and the advancement thereof in the hearts of mankind ; and in order to your present and future happiness, thirst daily after the life of righteousness, and seek holiness for your habitation whilst in this world, that eternal glory may be your crown in that which is to come.

In the love and fellowship of the gospel, we commit you to the

* ROM. viii. 13.

guidance and protection of our holy head and high priest the Lord Jesus Christ, and remain your Friends and brethren.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOSHUA STRANGMAN,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XCVI—1773.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

The salutation of our sincere and tender love, in the Lord Jesus Christ, reaches towards you, wherever, in the course of divine Providence, your respective allotments may be, fervently desiring your preservation from the evils that abound in the world, and an increase of the wisdom and virtue of the precious truth in and amongst you.

We have fresh cause, in deep thankfulness, reverently to acknowledge the renewed goodness of our gracious Lord and law-giver, in this our large and solemn assembly, by which we have been enabled to consider, and conclude the important affairs before us in much brotherly love, to our edification and comfort.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in this year from the counties in England and Wales, chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand eight hundred ninety-seven pounds; and those from Ireland, one thousand five hundred and thirteen pounds.

By advices from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina, we are given to understand that Friends are generally preserved in love and unity; that, in divers places, some have been added to the church by conviction; and that a godly care rests upon many for the maintenance of probity, piety, and charity, and the promotion of truth amongst mankind.

And, dear Friends; feeling a concern renewed in our minds, that your offspring may be brought up, and preserved a generation to the praise of their Creator, we intreat you in particular, who are parents, and all intrusted with the tuition of children, weightily to consider your calling, and the charge committed to you; and that whilst you are solicitous to provide, for their bodies, the welfare of their souls may not be neglected, but con-

stantly engage the principal part of your care and diligence. Seeing the earliest impressions generally last the longest, as soon as you find children capable of receiving instruction, let it be your earnest endeavour, properly to improve their understandings in things that may conduce to their lasting welfare. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" labour therefore to impress it upon them, and to bring them acquainted with the living principle of the spirit of truth in themselves. Educate them in a just and reverent regard thereunto, and be careful to enforce your endeavours by your own exemplary conduct. This, with the frequent practice of reading the Holy Scriptures, will assist in forming their tender minds to piety and virtue, and be a mean of preserving them from the dangerous influence of such conversation and writings, as tend, either to excite inordinate affections, or to instil those irreligious principles which corrupt the mind, and alienate it from the Spirit and power of God, wherein alone is the happiness and security of his people.

"A manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."* The seed of the kingdom is sown in every heart, whether it prove as the highway-side, the thorny, the stony, or the good ground. In the growth of this spiritual internal seed stands our preservation and progress heaven-ward. As it takes root and spreads in our hearts, it gradually expels the unfruitful works of darkness, and brings forth the fruits of the Spirit, which the apostle experimentally declared to be "in all goodness, righteousness, and truth." By the increase of this heavenly seed, that necessary change is accomplished in us, of putting "off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts," and of being so "renewed in the spirit of our minds, as to put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."†

When we consider the luxury, dissipation, and voluptuousness which abound in the present age, debasing man below his rank, enervating his mind, and unfitting him to pursue the paths of virtue and happiness, we cannot but feel an anxious concern for the preservation of our society from the spreading contagion; knowing that these things obstruct the advancement of those in whomsoever they have place, in the way of life and salvation. By disobedience to the reproofs of instruction in their own hearts, men gradually become captives to the power of darkness, and subject to all manner of wickedness; and as great sins bring great sorrow, and general corruption introduces general distress, may we not justly dread the visitation of divine displeasure, in consequence of the general depravity and licentiousness of the times?

* 1 COR. xii. 7. † EPHES. iv. 22, 23, 24.

It therefore highly behoves all, and especially those who profess the truth as it is in Jesus, humbly to apply for ability, uprightly to search their own hearts, and to examine their conversation and conduct, to see that they contribute not to the great and too general offence, against the omniscient Judge of quick and dead.

We beseech you, brethren, call to remembrance, and diligently follow the self-denying example of our faithful predecessors, who in obedience to the captain of their salvation, were carefully concerned to put in practice his indispensable precept; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."* They were conspicuous examples of self-denial in dress, in diet, and in furniture, confining themselves to things necessary, decent and useful, and avoiding all superfluities, lest their minds should be led from the pure simplicity of truth, and their feet ensnared and turned from the paths of peace. Keeping their eye fixed, above sensual and temporal gratifications, on the heavenly recompence of reward, they bore a noble testimony against the prevailing corruptions of their age.

May we constantly keep in mind, that we are most surely accountable to the great author of our being, and that we are every moment the immediate objects of his notice. How carefully therefore ought every individual to walk in circumspection, and holy fear before him, and obedience to him! nothing can be hid from him, "neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do;"† who also declared by his prophet, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."‡

"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," and carefully resist its motions in the very root and ground. It is not sufficient to exert our zeal against the branches only. The gospel "axe is laid to the root;"§ and though temptations abound in the world and its concerns, the ground of evil is not to be looked for without us, but within us. Our Saviour shewed; that evil thoughts, evil practices, and whatsoever defiles the man, proceeds out of the heart: there it is first conceived, and therein is the nature and power of sin, whence sinful words and actions arise. There the great refiner must sit, to purify us as silver, in order to fit us for an everlasting inheritance with the saints in light. "If I wash thee not," saith our Lord, "thou hast no part with me."|| Through the laver of regeneration all must

* MAT. xvi. 24. † HEB. iv. 13. ‡ JER. xvii. 10. § MAT. iii. 10. || JOHN xiii. 8.

pass, who enter that kingdom of purity and glory which admits of nothing unclean.

Hence appears the necessity of closing with the convictions, and abiding under the operation of the refining power of the spirit of truth in the first place. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." And we beseech you, dear Friends, carefully to avoid all connections, company, and converse, that have a tendency to entangle you in the spirit of the world, which lieth in wickedness, ever remembering, that its kingdom is foolishness, its pleasures are vanity and vexation of spirit, its sorrow works death, and its friendship is enmity with God. Seek therefore to live in the spirit and nature of the gospel, that ye may be lively examples, "in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

The more vice and vanity abound, the more strictly ought we to watch against them, that we may not be insnared and overcome by them. Numbers will neither be any excuse, nor alleviation to us in the great day of account; and if we see some fail on one hand, and some on another, whilst we lament their defection, let their harms be our warnings, and let us not, by any means, take occasion to lift ourselves up in our own esteem, by making unwise comparisons between their state and ours; but ever hold in due observance the following apostolic advice: "I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. Be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Be kindly affectioned one to another," watching over one another for good; and seeing "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory;"* but seek peace and pursue it, that good order, union and concord may be preserved. Be not apt to take offence, and let each in his own particular, be more assiduous to guard against his own weaknesses and imperfections, than to pry into, or expose those of others. Let mutual forbearance and forgiveness have due place among you; for, saith our Lord, "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."†

In all your concerns and conduct, keep an eye to the guidance

* ROM. xii. 3. 1 PET. v. 5. 8. ROM. xii. 10. 2 TIM. ii. 24. PHIL. ii. 3. † MAT. vi. 14, 15.

of divine wisdom, and your hearts open to its influence; that ye may be preserved upright in all your transactions, faithful in every branch of our christian testimony, and in a state of fitness to approach the divine presence in your religious meetings. Then may you, with reverent and humble confidence, wait and apply for the renewings of that quickening and consolating life and virtue, which qualifies for the practice of pure religion and acceptable worship, and is a rock of strength to the Lord's people, the joy of their souls, and the crown of their assemblies.

Finally, dear Friends: we exhort you, that the fresh remembrance of our beloved brethren, lately, as well as formerly, removed from time to eternity, who were exemplary in life, and eminent in service, may humbly and earnestly engage all our minds to follow them as they followed Christ; that when the most sure and solemn period shall draw near to us, being redeemed from death and the power of the grave, we, with the like blessed assurance which appeared in them, may have experimentally to say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" All the interests, honours and enjoyments of this mutable world, are not worthy to be placed in the least degree of comparison with such an excellent state. Seek it whilst, and where it is to be found, in the living principle of eternal truth, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the grace of God that bringeth salvation. Watch and wait for it, cleave to it, and abide in it, that when the end of all things to you here shall approach, you may be prepared to join the just of all generations, "the general assembly and church of the first-born written in heaven," to ascribe "blessing and honour, and glory and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

WILLIAM DILLWORTH,

Clerk to the Meeting this year:

EPISTLE XCVII—1774.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in the fellowship of the gospel, fervently desiring, that grace, mercy and peace may be with you; and that through the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit, every christian virtue may be implanted in your hearts, and manifested in

your lives, to your own comfort, and the praise of God, who hath called us to righteousness and holiness.

We have had fresh cause to renew our grateful acknowledgments to the Father of Mercies, whose goodness hath been comfortably experienced in this large and solemn assembly, to our help and refreshment both in meetings for worship, and those for the preservation of order, and the due maintenance of discipline; wherein the affairs before us have been conducted in a spirit of brotherly love and christian condescension.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year from the counties in England, and from Wales, principally on account of tithes and those called church-rates, amount to four thousand one hundred and forty-two pounds; and those from Ireland to one thousand five hundred ninety-one pounds. One Friend is a prisoner by a process in the Exchequer, on account of tithes.

By advices from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and by Epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, North and South-Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New-York and New-England, we have information that the churches are generally preserved in love and unity, that a godly care is maintained for the promotion of truth and virtue, that great willingness appears in many parts to hear the truths of the gospel, that divers have been joined to us by conviction, and, that amongst our brethren in the American colonies, our testimony against the inhuman practice of slave-keeping gains ground, and hath had some happy influence on the minds of considerate people of other denominations, in opposition to that flagrant injustice to our fellow-creatures; for whom our Saviour shed his precious blood, as well as for others, and to whom he dispenseth a measure of his grace in common with the rest of mankind.

It hath often deeply affected our spirits, in these our annual solemnities, when we have considered the excellence of that divine principle, the manifestation of God's Holy Spirit in the heart and conscience, repeatedly inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, and held forth by us to the world, and at the same time have reflected upon the conduct of many in profession with us, who, for want of due regard thereunto, have become darkened in their minds, lukewarm towards religion, and in divers cases obviously defective in duty, to their own hurt, and the disreputation of our christian society. Yet we have sufficient ground to believe, that a considerable number are preserved who are honestly concerned to abide under the blessed guidance of the spirit of truth, to grow in grace, and in the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk as becometh the gospel.

We earnestly intreat that all may be stirred up to embrace that

needful exhortation of the prophet, "Turn thou to thy God, keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually."* This duly put in practice, would by divine assistance, greatly conduce to the good of all. Be it therefore, brethren and sisters, who are parents of children, or heads of families, your constant endeavour, not to indulge any under your care, in the leavening friendships of those who have not a living sense of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and therefore abide in the modish vanities and pleasures of this world. Restrain them as much as may be, from any thing that hath a tendency to divert them from the true watch-tower of inward retirement; and for your own sakes as well as theirs, neglect no opportunities of encouraging them thereunto by your example.

"What I say unto you," saith our Saviour, "I say unto all, watch."† Be prevailed with therefore, to make it your constant practice daily, before you enter upon affairs of a temporal nature, to wait reverently and patiently upon the gracious helper of Israel, to feel the arising of his pure influence over your minds, which you will find the best preparative for a proper discharge of duty in all your engagements: and be careful, whatever your concerns may be in the course of the day, to keep your attention towards him, and to do nothing that may offend and cause him to withdraw his preserving power from you, and leave you to your own weakness: so shall you be guarded against the inroads of evil, and not live as without God in the world, but under an awful sense of his heavenly presence, and the conduct of his good spirit, which leadeth in the way everlasting; and "Blessed," saith the Psalmist, "are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity." PSAL. cxix. 1, &c.

We beseech you, dear young people, who are sensible of the visitation from on high, and have tasted the power of its love, suffer nothing to draw you from it. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."‡ This inward speaker is the spirit of your Redeemer. Esteem his reproofs above the world's caresses, and prize his cross before all its enjoyments; for these will soon terminate in disappointment and sorrow, but that will lead to enduring substance. The way to the crown is strait to flesh and blood, and there is no other by which it can be obtained. Be neither afraid nor ashamed of it. Enter it in the days of your youth, and whether you reach to old age or not, as you

* HOSEA xii. 6. † MARK xiii. 37. ‡ HEB. xii. 25.

steadily persevere therein, you will have cause to rejoice in that peace which passeth the understanding of the carnal mind. Great is the advantage you possess above those in more advanced years, who have long suffered themselves to be insnared into negligence and delays, and who being again mercifully awakened to behold their danger, deeply deplore the loss they have sustained, and the difficulty they find in their return, from the many entanglements and inconveniences their former remissness hath subjected them to. Improve the precious opportunity put into your hands. "Seek the Lord while he is to be found: call upon him while he is near." It will be highly beneficial to you, and contribute much to your strength and consolation, if you employ that time in attending upon God, and seeking to advance in divine life and virtue, which so many of our fellow creatures inconsiderately lavish away in idle and unprofitable discourse, in conversing with the numerous publications calculated to divert their attention from the Sacred Writings, and from a virtuous and godly life, by gratifying the passions, exciting levity, or instilling the pernicious principles of infidelity and licentiousness, and also in the pursuit of various kinds of dissipating and ruinous entertainments; those dangerous snares of Satan, which corrupt and captivate unguarded minds, whilst they pass upon them under the deceitful colour of innocent amusements. Give due regard to that apostolic advice, "Flee youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord with a pure heart."

2 TIM. ii. 22.

We are sensible, that many of you have experienced the work of truth begun; and in measure carried on in your hearts, to whom our exhortation is, stand always open thereunto. Set no bound in your minds to the operation of the Holy Spirit, either from inclinations to self-indulgence, or from the fear or favour of men. It is not for man to say to his maker, "Hitherto I will follow thee, and no further. I must allow myself this and the other liberty, in speech, in dress, in behaviour, in converse, in commerce, or in any kind of self-gratification." You can never obtain divine approbation by this mean, but will surely incur the displeasure of him you were created to obey, minister cause for him to withdraw the sense of his preserving presence from you, and leave you to the painful fruits of your own devices. Remember; "The way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps—The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." JER. X. 23. PSAL. XXXvii.

23.

Dear Friends of every age and station, in all your assemblies

for divine worship look inward, and seek the Lord with fervency. Rest not satisfied with barely sitting amongst those who are engaged in spirit to dig for the well-spring of life and wisdom, that they may have bread in their own houses, and water in their own cisterns. Content not yourselves with an expectation or desire only, to hear the doctrines of the gospel declared, like those in the time of the prophet Ezekiel, concerning whom it was said, by way of reproof, "they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them." EZEK. xxxiii. 31.

Let us pass the time of our sojourning here in the fear of God. For time is to all equally uncertain, and most surely diminisheth to us every day. It therefore highly behoves us to make the best use of the present portion of time, and measure of grace afforded, that we may be found in a state of readiness when the solemn hour of final separation shall approach. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 COR. v. 10.

May the infinite author of all good vouchsafe to quicken us to stricter watchfulness, and more diligence in the discharge of our respective duties, that through a reverent attention to his instruction, and obedience to his requirings, we may grow from one degree of grace and faith to another, and be so replenished with the virtue of his Holy Spirit, as to become fruitful unto every good word and work; that the end of our creation may be answered, which is to glorify our Father who is in heaven, and to enjoy everlasting blessedness in him, who alone is worthy of all honour, praise and dominion for ever.

Signed in and on behalf of our Yearly Meeting, by

JACOB HAGEN,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XCVIII—1775.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In a renewed sense of the love of God, shed abroad in our hearts, we affectionately salute you, and give you to understand, that our annual assembly hath been measurably attended with that ancient power and goodness which is the strength and comfort of the living in Israel; by the help whereof, the important

concerns of the society have been transacted in a spirit of love, condescension, and concord.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year from the counties in England, and from Wales, principally for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount to four thousand three hundred and forty-four pounds; and those from Ireland to one thousand four hundred and thirty-four pounds. The Friend mentioned in our last epistle as a prisoner, by a process in the Exchequer on account of tithes, hath been since set at liberty, in consequence of a sequestration and sale of his goods.

By accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island, and New-England, Long-Island for New-York, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina, we are informed, that, notwithstanding the apparent deviation of too many, a godly concern for the maintenance of upright walking, brotherly love, unity and order, subsists in the churches; that several, through conviction, have been joined to our religious community, in divers places; also, that the body of Friends in America, as well as here, are generally preserved from concerning themselves as parties in the present heats and commotions; and we intreat all in membership with us, to enter as little into conversation respecting them as possible, and daily to seek for, and abide under the influence of that heavenly principle which leads to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

We trust that we are called to shew forth to the world in life and practice, that the blessed reign of the Messiah, the prince of peace, is begun, and we doubt not but it will proceed till it attain, in due time its completion in the earth, when, according to the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Influenced by these principles, we cannot consistently join with such as form combinations of a hostile nature against any, much less, in opposition to those providentially placed either in sovereign or subordinate authority; nor can we unite with, or encourage such as indecently asperse or revile them: "For it is written, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Acts xxiii. 5.

And, dear Friends; seeing the spirit of truth, which manifesteth itself in the heart and conscience, is given for a leader into all truth; by the assistance whereof, we may, through obedience, be enabled to demean ourselves with propriety, throughout the various transactions and trials incident to this life of probation: we beseech you, have an eye to its guidance in all your concerns,

carefully avoiding all improper pursuits, and misleading amusements. Endeavour to improve the precious moments afforded, to your lasting advantage. Take frequent opportunities of retiring to wait in humility and reverence upon the Lord; and in all seasons of worship, whether public or private, let your attention be fixed singly upon him, guarding against every thought and imagination that might obstruct your desires, and the strict adherence of your minds to the Father of Spirits, and fountain of immortal good.

If, on such occasions, we sit in an unwatchful and unconcerned frame, indolence of mind will introduce heaviness of body; and where drowsiness appears in meetings, it is a grief and burden to the sensibly concerned, an ill example to others, and reproachful to our holy profession.

Let every one therefore, who professeth to worship the omnipresent Lord in spirit and truth, give diligent attendance both on First and other days of the week, and be neither careless in coming together, nor slack in exercise when assembled. Let all affairs of an inferior nature give place to this great and profitable duty; for true worship is both acceptable to God and beneficial to our own souls.

The Lord, saith the prophet, "is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him." This ought to encourage, and strongly induce us, often to renew the practice of humble retirement before the bountiful rewarder of those who diligently seek him. The more it is followed, the comforts of divine grace are the more experienced, faith increased, and ability received to "live according to God in the spirit;" and the apostle exhorts, "if we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit." 1 PET. iv. 6. GAL. v. 25.

Whoever would be truly a disciple of Christ, must know not only a beginning, but an abiding in the spirit. It is not sufficient for any, that they have once known the truth, and for a time followed its leadings. If they are since become indifferent and cool in their minds towards it, they are fallen from their first love, their first faith, and their first works. "I have somewhat against thee," said the Spirit to the church of Ephesus, "because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." REV. ii. 4, 5.

Our Saviour, alluding to the day of gracious visitation, afforded us, saith, "yet a little while is the light with you; walk whilst ye have light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have

“ the light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of light.”
 JOHN. xii. 35, 36.

Truly to believe, and steadily to walk in the light of God's Holy Spirit, we must resign ourselves to its guidance, and abide in the paths of humility and self-denial. The over anxious cares of the world, and the inordinate delights thereof, are incompatible with the life of a follower of Christ, who said, “ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” LUKE ix. 23. and xiv. 27.

“ The preaching of the cross,” saith the apostle, “ is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God.” In the cross, the power is experienced; out of the cross, we want the power, and necessarily abide in weakness, void of that sense of the divine presence, which is the strength and support of the faithful. Hence, in great measure, ariseth that mournful and discouraging complaint of lowness and debility; and is it not to be attributed to the lukewarmness, the neglect and disobedience of individuals, and to the remissness of those parts of the body which fail in a due exertion of discipline, and in communicating proper and timely admonition ?

From the mixture of pain, trouble, and disappointment, which, in the course of Providence, attends all sublunary enjoyments, and from the many warnings given forth in Holy Writ, against resting upon them, or indulging ourselves in them, as well as from the remorse that ensues upon such indulgence, it is evident, that a life of self-gratification is dangerous to our present and future happiness.

We are therefore called upon to “ watch continually,” and to “ pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.” A reverent regard to this advice is undoubtedly requisite. Time slides away apace, and must inevitably bring us to that solemn period when our state will be determined either to happiness or misery for ever. How circumspect then ought we to be, that neither the cares nor comforts, the profits nor pleasures, of this mutable life, may so prevail as to prevent the improvement required at our hands, and beguile us of our reward ! “ To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” ROM. viii. 6.

“ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”* Whoever therefore, would be a true christian, must not trust in a name, or a profession of christianity, but be inwardly engaged to experience the effectual work of regeneration, to “ put off the old man

* 2 COR. v. 17.

“ which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of his mind, by putting on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.” For this end, let neither the levity of a vain mind, nor the darkness of a carnal understanding hold any of us in bondage to earthly things, and objects of a perishing nature; but let us be fervently concerned to seek the accomplishment of this great and necessary work in us, that we may be found in a state of preparation for that awful moment, when “ the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it.” Then we may hope, that “ when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory.” ECCLES. xii. 7. COLOS. iii. 4.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOSEPH DOCWRA,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE XCIX—1776.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the love and fellowship of the gospel we tenderly salute you, as partakers of the like precious faith with us, and hereby acquaint you, that we have renewed occasion to acknowledge the gracious extension of divine goodness to us in this our large and solemn assembly; by which the souls of many have been refreshed and edified, and ability received to transact the affairs of the church in much brotherly love and concord.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, from the counties in England and Wales, being principally for tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds; and those from Ireland, one thousand three hundred and eighty-seven pounds.

By accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland and Holland, we have information that love and unity are generally preserved; that the merciful visitations of divine grace are still continued, and appear eminently extended to the youth amongst us, as well as to many of other professions in several parts, divers of whom have been admitted into membership with us through conviction.

By epistles received from several of the provinces in America

ca, we have affecting information of the state of Friends in those parts; and deeply sympathize with the faithful, wheresoever they are situated, under their afflictions, and fervently desire, that this season of outward probation may be sanctified to all. We are sensible it must try the foundations of many, and, we trust, it may bring again to the fold some, who, during a long enjoyment of ease and tranquility, in those once happy and flourishing countries, have incautiously wandered till they have almost forgotten the true shepherd of the flock, Christ Jesus.

It is worthy of the serious consideration of all, whether the calamities now deeply affecting this great empire, may not have been permitted by divine providence in displeasure, on account of the accumulated transgressions of the people. Let all, therefore, honestly and strictly inquire, how far they have individually contributed thereto.

And, dear Friends; we earnestly recommend it to all, humbly to bow themselves before the Lord of the universe, craving his divine assistance, and the preservation of the faithful of every denomination; fervently desiring that he may grant repentance and forgiveness to those who have long lived in forgetfulness of the God who formed them for a purpose of his glory, and of Christ their holy Redeemer.

Let us humbly retire to that blessed principle of strength and wisdom, the grace of God, manifested in our hearts; that through a strict adherence thereunto, we may be favoured to experience it to be as a munition of rocks, and a sure hiding place, to which the righteous fly and are safe in every time of trial; that, in like manner with the evangelical prophet, we may be enabled truly to say, "I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my song, he also is become my salvation." ISA. xii. 2.

Finally, brethren, keep in singleness of heart, and resignation of soul to the Almighty, that he may bless and replenish you with that perfect love which casteth out all fear. Then shall ye be at peace in yourselves, and one with another, and "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ." PHIL. iv. 7.

Signed in and on behalf, of the Yearly Meeting, by

THOMAS RUTTER,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE C—1777.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren;

Under an awful sense of that divine love and mercy, which have been graciously renewed to us in this our annual assembly, we tenderly salute you, and thankfully acknowledge the goodness of God to us, both in our meetings for worship, and those for transacting the necessary affairs of the church; which have been well attended, and the business conducted in a solid and weighty manner, to our edification and comfort.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, from the counties in England and Wales, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand eight hundred and seventy-one pounds, and those from Ireland, one thousand four hundred forty-five pounds:

By accounts from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey; we have received information, that, notwithstanding the instability and deviation of some amongst us, the divine visitations of truth have so happily prevailed upon others, that many appear to have been convinced of our religious principles, and divers have joined in membership with us since last year.

We have also, with much satisfaction, to acquaint you, that the general body of Friends in America, under all the trials and difficulties they are exposed to in these times of confusion and peril, have been preserved in a conduct consistent with our peaceable principles. United in brotherly love, and in the same precious faith, we truly sympathize with them, verily believing it to be our indispensable duty to promote the gospel of peace in life and practice, and to approve ourselves followers of the Lamb of God, who, when upon earth, overcame through suffering, and "left us an example that we should follow his steps." 1 PET. ii. 21. For, according to holy writ, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked." 1 JOHN ii. 6.

We are likewise agreeably informed of the unremitting concern, and great labour used by our Friends in the colonies, to obtain the freedom of those poor Africans who are still held in a state of bondage; and also of their especial care to prevent all professing with us, from any way ministering encouragement to such as carry on that inhuman traffick, of dealing in mankind, and forcibly enslaving their fellow-creatures, for the sake of a

perishing interest. The christian endeavours and example of our brethren in this respect, afford an additional satisfaction, as they have induced many of other professions to restore numbers of these injured people to their liberty. And it is our earnest desire, that Friends in these kingdoms may carefully avoid every temptation to assist in, or promote, a business so cruel, iniquitous and unchristian.

And, dear Friends ; amongst the many hurtful things those are liable to, who live not in due subjection to the light of God's Holy Spirit in their own consciences, let us revive in your view at this time, that of mixing in marriage with those of different persuasions in religion.

Marriage being a divine ordinance, and a solemn engagement for term of life, is of great importance to our peace, and well-being in this world, and may prove of no small consequence respecting our state in that which is to come ; yet it is often too inconsiderately entered into, upon motives inconsistent with the evident intention of that unerring wisdom by which it was primarily ordained ; which was for the mutual assistance and comfort of both sexes, that they might be meet-helpers to each other, both in spirituals and temporals, and that their endeavours might be united for the pious and proper education of their children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and for suitably qualifying them to discharge their duty in their various allotments in the world.

Marriage implies union and concurrence, as well in spiritual as temporal concerns. Whilst the parties differ in religion, they stand disunited in the main point ; even that which should increase and confirm their mutual happiness, and render them meet-helpers and blessings to each other. Where it is otherwise, the reciprocal obligation they have entered into becomes their burden, and the more so, as it may not be of a short and transient duration. Whatever felicity they might expect or flatter themselves with in the beginning, they have found themselves disappointed of, by the daily uneasiness accompanying their minds, and imbittering their enjoyments.

The perplexed situation of the offspring of such alliances is likewise to be lamented. Attached by nature to both parents, the confusion they are in often renders them unfixed in principle, and unsettled in practice : or if, as it is usual, the sons go with the father, and the daughters with the mother, brothers and sisters are trained up in lines of conduct diverse from, and, in some cases opposite to each other. Thus, differing in principle, they are frequently divided in affection, and though so nearly related,

are sometimes at the greatest distance from that love and harmony which ought continually to subsist between them.

To prevent falling into these disagreeable and disorderly engagements, it is requisite to beware of the paths that lead to them....the sordid interests, and insnaring friendships of the world, the contaminating pleasures and idle pastimes of earthly minds; also the various solicitations and incentives to festivity and dissipation. Let them likewise especially avoid too frequent and too familiar converse with those from whom may arise a danger of entanglement, by their alluring the passions, and drawing the affections after them.

For want of due watchfulness, and obedience to the convictions of divine grace in their consciences, many amongst us, as well as others, have wounded their own souls, distressed their friends, injured their families, and done great disservice to the church, by these unequal connections; which have proved an inlet to much degeneracy, and mournfully affected the minds of those who labour under a living concern for the good of all, and the prosperity of truth upon earth.

Finally, brethren, that ye may be of those concerning whom the Lord said formerly, by his prophet, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." Isa. xliii. 21. We beseech you, cleave to him with full purpose of heart; trust in him, be willingly subject to the reproofs of instruction, and the guidance of divine grace, that ye may be kept in brotherly love, and walk in wisdom towards those that are without, giving no occasion of stumbling or offence to any, either in word or deed; but by a circumspect and savoury conversation, ministering to the help of those whose eyes are upon you, to observe how your conduct answers the holy principle of your profession.

May the God of all grace sanctify your hearts by the effectual operation of his Holy Spirit, that, in the conclusion, he may receive you into his kingdom of unchangeable purity, peace, and glory.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

SAMPSON LLOYD, junr.

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CI—1778.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We salute you in a sense of that pure and powerful love which, through our Lord Jesus Christ, hath been mercifully renewed to us in this our large and solemn assembly, to the help and refreshment of our spirits in transacting the affairs of the church, which have been conducted in the fellowship of the gospel, and under a deep engagement of mind for the whole flock and family, that all may be sincerely concerned, and truly enabled, to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, in lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, and endeavouring to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The amount of Friends’ sufferings brought in this year, from the counties in England and Wales, being principally for tithes, and those called church-rates, is four thousand five hundred and ninety-one pounds; and those from Ireland, one thousand six hundred and seventy-seven pounds.

By accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, we are acquainted that love and unity are generally preserved in the churches; and that a considerable number hath been added to the society, by conviction, in various parts. We are also informed, that the difficulties and distresses of our Friends in America have been, and still continue to be, great in divers provinces.

“Affliction,” it is said, “cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.”* Let the present calamities, therefore, awfully impress every mind, and lead us seriously to reflect, both on the many mercies we, with our fellow-subjects, have long and largely enjoyed, and the distressing prospect now before us; that all may individually turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and, in a sense of our own nothingness and unworthiness, abide in humble prostration of spirit before him, that he may vouchsafe to forgive our offences, to renew his covenant of peace with us, and enable us to walk as lights in the world; and by our savoury conversation and exemplary conduct, to lead the tender inquirer into the life of righteousness and true holiness.

We also tenderly intreat, that none who have received a sense of divine visitation may either rest contented with a bare cou-

* JOB V 6.

vincement, or satisfy themselves with having been enabled to make some advances in the way to life and salvation, concluding they have sufficiently attained, that they are already made whole, and that all is safe and well with them; for such may be assured, they have suffered loss, though they see it not; and if they so continue, will, at best, settle in a state of weakness, dwarfishness, and danger. Let not any therefore sit as at ease in Zion; but let all arise, and with zeal and fervency press daily forward, following on to know the Lord, and acknowledging him in all their ways, that he may direct their paths; lest, like the backsliders in Israel, they fall in the wilderness, and never obtain an inheritance in the promised land.

Had every one in profession with us been duly careful to live in subjection to the principle of truth, those afflicting occasions of sorrow and of censure, which arise from an inordinate pursuit of the profits, the pleasures of the world, and the pride of life, might have been prevented. An extension of trade and business beyond the bounds of prudence, justice, and propriety, and the limitations of God's holy witness in the conscience, cannot obtain that divine blessing which alone maketh truly rich, and adds no sorrow; therefore it is not to be wondered at, if the hazardous adventures of the covetous and imprudent should terminate in their failure, the grief of their friends, the hurt of their connections, and reproach of their profession.

Experience hath abundantly verified that just and striking reflection in holy writ: "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*

Being painfully affected with some recent instances of this nature, we earnestly exhort, that Friends, in the districts of their respective Monthly Meetings, be watchful over one another in love, and particularly caution such as appear in danger of launching beyond their depth, by entering into concerns too extensive, or too numerous for their abilities to discharge with punctuality and honour; and where dealing with any such is found requisite, we intreat you, brethren, have no respect to persons in judgment; yet, as the apostle Jude directs, "On some have compassion, making a difference,"† according to the diversity of cases. But if any wilfully proceed against the advice or admonition of Friends, let them in due time be dealt with as the discipline of the society requires.

* 1 TIM. vi. 9, 10.

† JUDE VER. 22.

And we further most tenderly exhort, that all be warned against spending their time, and the substance in their hands, unprofitably, by resorting to places of vain, irreligious, and dissipating entertainment; also, against high and expensive living, or an affectation of pomp and figure; by which unwarrantable and unbecoming practices, many have been reduced to the want of a piece of bread; beside the loss they have sustained in credit and character, and the distress and anxiety of mind which are the certain consequences of such misconduct.

The sacred writings inform us, Christ "died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them."* To live unto him, we must live and walk in his Spirit, observe his precepts, and follow his example in the way of humility, moderation, and self-denial; otherwise, we cannot be his followers. "If any man," saith he, "will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

A professional belief in Christ, and of the doctrines of the gospel, may denominate us christians; but to be christians indeed, we must be indued with the spirit and nature of christianity. "He is not a Jew," saith the apostle, "who is one outwardly;" neither is he a true christian who is only one outwardly; "for, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature"---"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Consequently, no man is in reality any further a christian, than as he is created anew in Christ Jesus. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."†

Seeing therefore, that essential and acceptable religion is only produced and maintained in us, through a renovation of heart by the spirit, the more frequently we wait for its powerful influence, and the more fervently we seek it, the oftener we shall find it renewed to us; for, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."‡

Finally, brethren, as the present season is a time of deep exercise and trial, let every one be weightily impressed with a living concern, to look steadily to him who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. If we live in his fear, we shall have just ground to confide in his protection; and that he will preserve us through all the vicissitudes of this mutable state in the safe munition of his own Spirit and power, where the instability of things without, will not be suffered improperly or immoderately to affect us. The things of the world are in continual

* 2 COR. v. 15. † JOHN vi. 63. ‡ ISA. xl. 31.

fluctuation and uncertainty, and in proportion to the hope and dependence that any place upon them, such will be their loss and disappointment: but "they who trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be moved"....For, "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people, from henceforth even for ever."

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

ISAAC WILSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CII—1779.

Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren,

In the love of God, and the fellowship of the gospel, which we have, with deep thankfulness of heart, in a good degree experienced to attend us, both in our meetings for worship, and those for transacting the affairs of the church, we affectionately salute you; with fervent desires that brotherly love, peace, and concord may continue and increase amongst us, and that a tender and christian concern may come upon all, in their respective stations, for the maintenance of good order, and the promotion of truth and righteousness upon earth.

By accounts received from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Maryland, North and South-Carolina, and Georgia, we are informed that love and unity are generally preserved in the churches, to many of which divers have been joined through conviction; and that a considerable number of well-disposed youth appears in various parts.

The sufferings of our brethren in America have been great in many places, especially in Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, Long-Island, Rhode-Island, and Nantucket. These sufferings have principally arisen from that confusion and distress which are inseparable from war, from the laws enacted for promoting military services, and from acts enforcing declarations of allegiance to those in power.

The Friends who were banished from Philadelphia have been permitted to return to their habitations, excepting two, who died

in exile; and some of those who were imprisoned have been set at liberty.

It is with satisfaction we understand, that their meetings for worship and discipline are duly kept up, and that notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers which surround them, Friends attend them with diligence, and many from remote places; their minds are often tendered therein, and united in love one to another, and in deep sympathy with the sufferers amongst them. And it evidently appears that the turning of the mighty hand of the Lord upon them hath not been in vain; but that, having learned by the things they have suffered, and from the apprehension of future probations, they are engaged to wait for that divine help, protection, and support, which alone can enable them to endure with patience and holy resignation the trials that are permitted to attend them.

Our brethren in those parts gratefully acknowledge the kindness and regard of Friends in England and Ireland, in so early and liberally contributing to the relief of their distresses. Many, from easy circumstances, have been reduced to great hardships and necessities, but have been measurably kept in a state of contentment; these have shared the benevolence of those who have been preserved from the like sufferings. It appears, that their afflictions, though grievous in divers places, have tended to awaken many to a proper sense of their condition, and to increase a watchfulness and care, that they may walk answerable to the mercies received, and stand faithful in the testimonies committed to their charge, against wars and other Antichristian practices.

May a deep sympathy with our afflicted brethren affect every mind; and may we all watch unto prayer, that it may please the divine majesty to shorten the day of their distress.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year from England and Wales, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount to three thousand seven hundred and sixty-three pounds, and those from Ireland to one thousand two hundred and fifty-four pounds.

Inasmuch as we have sufficient ground to believe that the true gospel ministry is freely received from the holy head and unchangeable high-priest of the christian church, and by him commanded to be freely given; MAT. x. 8. we cannot esteem the laws of men, made in the apostatized state of the professing churches, as of any force to controul and supercede his divine law, or to warrant us to act in violation thereof; we therefore exhort you, brethren, be true and stedfast in the faith once delivered to the saints, and deeply suffered for by divers of the protestant martyrs, as well as by our own faithful predecessors.

However any amongst us, to whom blindness in part hath hap-
pened, may swerve from the law, and from the testimony, suffer
it not to fall as in the streets, through your weakness, or the
want of your example; lest, for your denial of Christ before men;
he deny you before his Father, and the holy angels.

Let us also remind such as may be remiss in attention to the
teachings of the grace of God in their own hearts, that the king-
dom of Christ is a peaceable kingdom; and though his servants
“walk in the flesh, they do not war after the flesh;” 2 COR. x.
3. He commands them “to love their enemies; MAT. v. 44. and
many who have followed him in the regeneration, and abode
under his government, have found themselves restrained from all
wars and fightings; which are not of the Spirit of the Saviour,
but that of the destroyer of mankind. Believing this, we cannot
consistently take any part therein; nor be concerned as owners
of armed vessels, in letters of marque, or as purchasers of prize
goods; neither can we assist in the sale of them; for whoever
amongst us so confederate with the captors, afford evident tokens
that they either prefer the gain of a corrupt interest to the con-
victions of divine light in their own consciences, or that they
are become insensible of them; both which must tend to their
condemnation.

Now, dear Friends; seeing our time is ever silently upon the
wing, and the opportunity afforded us for the important work of
preparation daily shortening; knowing also, that the solemn pe-
riod advances, wherein every individual, however occupied in
this transient mode of being, must soon be called hence, and may
in a moment unexpected, be broken off from every temporal con-
nection, by that awful command, “Give an account of thy stew-
ardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward;” let us be vi-
gilant, and in earnest so to improve the precious time allotted us,
that when this awakening call approaches, our consciences may
not accuse us; but our faith may be firm, and an admittance
granted us into that city which hath foundations, whose builder
and maker is God!

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as
“wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Peace be
“to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, and
“the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our
“Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” EPH. v. 15.--vi. 23.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN FOTHERGILL,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CIII—1780.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We feel our minds engaged, in deep reverence and thankfulness, to acknowledge the eminent tokens of divine regard, both immediately and instrumentally vouchsafed to us at this season, by which we have been much refreshed, and enabled to transact the affairs of the church, in unity; harmony, and brotherly love, wherein we affectionately salute you; fervently desiring, that in all your respective meetings, your spirits may be united in an earnest travail for the arising of that quickening spring of heavenly power and virtue, which is the life and crown of our solemnities.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, from the counties of England and Wales, being principally for tithes, and those called church-rates, is three thousand eight hundred and eleven pounds; and those from Ireland, one thousand two hundred and eighty-one pounds.

By accounts from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, we are informed, that a considerable convincement appears in divers places, and many have joined in membership with us, both in these parts and America; and also, that the just and charitable endeavours of Friends on that continent have so happily succeeded, that the slavery of the poor negroes is nearly put an end to amongst them, and has greatly decreased amongst those of other professions.

Advice hath been often communicated from this meeting on the subject of education, the effects of which are so manifestly interesting and important to mankind: for though it is the grace and good Spirit of God, through Christ, that bringeth salvation, yet, the earlier young minds are instructed, and the better they are prepared to receive the seed of the kingdom, the more likely they will be to retain its virtue, and profit thereby.

Youth are very liable to form intimacies with those who suit their natural inclinations and passions, and to imbibe their spirit and manners, which too often lead them from a due attention to the manifestations of truth in their own hearts, and to disregard the salutary advice of their friends, till they become entangled in disagreeable and hurtful connections; out of which, it may not be in the power of their friends to extricate them. We there-

fore entreat you, brethren and sisters, who are placed over them, as parents, guardians, or teachers, to keep those under your charge, as much as possible, out of the way of temptation, both by timely caution, and proper restraint. Train them up in useful learning, and to suitable employments. Inure them to the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the religious writings of those who have been concerned and experienced in the work and power of truth. Guard them against all publications which have a tendency to affect and heighten their passions, to excite lightness and vanity, or to instil principles of infidelity, and licentiousness: minister not to their hurt by improper indulgence, nor suffer them to fall into evil through connivance, or neglecting to apprize them of the dangers that surround them.

And, dear young people, we tenderly beseech you, receive with all due regard, the wholesome counsel of those who are honestly concerned for you, and the labours of love both publicly and privately bestowed upon you; and, above all, adhere to the Spirit of Christ in your own hearts, which, if ye wait for, and diligently seek after, ye will feel to move livingly in your minds against all manner of evil, and through daily submission to its divine guidance, ye will experience the blessed operation thereof, till ye are favoured with a participation of its heavenly nature, and enabled to abide under its preserving power; the safe munition of the watchful and obedient.

Let not any thing divert your attention from this divine principle, nor draw you to join with temptation; for notwithstanding the corruptions of the world may appear displeasing, or even disgustful to you, on their first presentation, if ye fly not from, but tamper or amuse yourselves with them, they will soon become familiar, and at length desirable. Thus many have gradually fallen into bondage to things they once held in abhorrence.

And, dear Friends; let a tender and christian concern come upon you all, in your several stations, to walk as becometh the gospel, and to watch over one another for good: and we especially entreat those appointed as elders and overseers to be diligent in the discharge of their extensive and important duties; that the ignorant may be informed, the weak strengthened, the tender encouraged, the scattered sought out, the unwary cautioned, the unruly warned, and that such as act in opposition to the testimonies required of us by the spirit and doctrines of truth, may be treated with in love and meekness, yet with an holy firmness; that the cause of truth may not be suffered to fall, through the remissness of those who are placed as watchmen on the walls of Sion.

It is much to be lamented, that any who have descended from pious ancestors, should fail of coming up in the steps of their forefathers, who stood firm in their integrity to the truth manifested unto them, through all the violence of persecution and outrage they met with, that they might keep a conscience void of offence to him who graciously supported them in exemplary faith and patience.

The christian principle they with so much zeal and constancy maintained, and so deeply suffered for, ought certainly to be of no light estimation with us in this day of ease, wherein we enjoy the freedom publicly to worship the great author of our being, and well-being, according to our consciences, and to hold forth the several branches of our religious duty to him, without enduring the like severities with our predecessors. They nobly kept their ground in the stormy season, and shall any of us, their successors, who reap the advantage of their faithfulness, take our flight in a time of calmness and serenity? We are under the same obligation they were, to testify to the truth both in profession and practice; to walk in self-denial, and to follow Christ in the regeneration. Let none, therefore, deny him, by disobedience to his requirings, or be ashamed of him before men, lest he deny them before his Father who is in heaven.

We are not under a necessity of applying to others; that we may learn how the case stands betwixt God and our own souls; Experience concurs with holy writ in teaching us; that his witness is within us, either excusing or accusing, according to our faithfulness, or unfaithfulness thereunto. To this internal witness, let all be entreated to give strict and reverent observance; not suffering the momentary acquisitions, or the fleeting enjoyments, of this world, to steal away the precious time mercifully allowed them; wherein to prepare for higher and more enduring fruitions.

Now though we think it needful thus to stir you up to duty, we are well satisfied that many of you are sincerely concerned to dwell in subjection to the gift of God in your own hearts; and we fervently desire the preservation and establishment of such in the blessed truth. May the number of these abundantly increase throughout the churches; that the refreshing showers of divine favour may be frequently renewed, and fall upon them "as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." PSALM cxxxiii. 5.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ

“ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.” Amen. EPH. iii. 20, 21.

Signed in, on behalf, and by order of our Meeting aforesaid,
 WILLIAM BLECKLY,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year,

EPISTLE CIV—1781.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We have abundant cause thankfully to acknowledge the gracious condescension of the Lord our God, in favouring this large and solemn assembly with the renewal of his ancient power and goodness; under a sense whereof his high and holy name hath been reverently worshipped, and the affairs before us were conducted in much brotherly love and concord, wherein we tenderly salute you, with fervent desires that all in profession with us may sincerely seek to be gathered into, and united together in, the one Spirit of the one true living head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, and may become strengthened and established in him for ever.

The amount of Friends' sufferings in England and Wales brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, is four thousand and seventy-one pounds; and those from Ireland, one thousand four hundred and forty-seven pounds.

By accounts from the Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, we have information, that love and unity are generally preserved in the churches; to which, in divers parts, considerable additions have been made by conviction. We have also to observe, respecting our brethren on the continent of America, that their sufferings on account of our peaceable testimony appear to increase, through the adverse occurrences arising from the continuance of the present unhappy commotions; yet they have gratefully to acknowledge, that through the superintending goodness of divine Providence, they have been generally favoured to hold their religious meetings without molestation: and, notwithstanding their numerous losses and various distresses, we find they have so far proceeded in the restoration of their captive negroes to their just liberty, that

the completion of that humane and charitable work appears to be at no great distance.

And, dear Friends; as occasion calls upon us, from some maritime parts of this nation, to revive in your remembrance the following advice in our epistle of the year 1757, we here recommend it to your serious observance.

‘ It having been weightily under the consideration of this meeting, to discourage all under our profession from that great inconsistency of being concerned in privateers, letters of marque, or ships armed in a warlike manner, we think it necessary very earnestly to recommend to all Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, to keep a watchful eye over their members in this important branch of our christian testimony; and where any inclination towards such practices appears, that timely admonition and suitable counsel be given in the spirit of love and meekness.

‘ And, dear Friends; as it hath pleased the Almighty to reveal unto mankind his Son Jesus Christ, the peaceable Saviour, let it be our steady concern to demonstrate to the world that we are his followers, by bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. And as we are called out of wars and fightings, so let them be as seldom as possible the subjects of our conversation; but let a holy care rest upon us, to abide in that power which gives dominion over the hopes and fears that arise from the concerns of an unstable world, and tend, as they are admitted into the mind, to lessen the trust upon that rock which is immoveable.’

And being fervently engaged in spirit that our christian testimony against wars and fighting may increase and prevail in the earth, we are constrained to entreat Friends every where, to keep clear of touching in any respect, or dealing in, those things which tend to promote the dreadful calamity of war. Let not the love of gain be put in competition with the welfare and happiness of mankind. Beware lest blood-guiltiness be found in the skirts of any. Beware lest the profits accumulated by such means should prove a snare and a curse instead of a blessing. And in order to take away the reproach brought upon us by the inconsistent conduct of some in profession with us, we earnestly recommend that such may be laboured with in a spirit of love and tenderness to convince them of their error.

Seeing also that some have not been sufficiently concerned to keep themselves clear of unadvised and imprudent adventures in trade and business, but have unwarrantably sought to support an appearance in the world above their circumstances, to the ruin of

themselves, and the hurt of others who placed a confidence in them; we think it requisite to renew our advice upon that head, as expressed in our epistle of 1754, viz.

‘ We beseech you, brethren, stand upon your guard against this love of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches; the nature of which is to choke the good seed, and to render men unfruitful. An eager pursuit after the grandeur of this world, is a certain token of earthly mindedness; and those who mind earthly things, are represented by the apostle Paul, as enemies of the cross of Christ: the beloved disciple of our Lord also expressly assures us, “ that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” ‘ A resolution to be rich hath destroyed many.’ “ They that will be rich, saith the apostle, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* ‘ This hath been verified in the ruinous consequences of an earthly ambitious spirit, pushing men forward, in the pursuit of greatness, upon hazardous attempts, which have often issued in the fall and ruin of themselves and families, the reproach of the society, and great loss to others; some of whom, probably, have placed the more confidence in them, for the sake of their profession of self-denial; which, had they really practised, would have prevented the fatal effects of their covetous and ambitious undertakings. Wherefore we entreat Friends, in their Monthly Meetings every where, to be properly watchful one over another, and early to caution all against running beyond their depth, and entangling themselves in a greater multiplicity of trade and business than they can extricate themselves from, with honour and reputation, and where any shall proceed in opposition to such advice and counsel of their brethren, let them in due time be dealt with, according to former advices of this meeting.”

And, dear Friends; in order to the proper discharge of every duty, both to God and man, let an especial regard be constantly had to the “ manifestation of the spirit given to every man to profit withal.”† If we live inattentive to this divine principle, graciously afforded us for our guide, leaning upon our own understandings, pursuing our own wills, and resting in the form and profession which it led our pious predecessors into, without a sincere and fervent concern daily to experience the life and virtue of it in our own hearts, we must find in the time of solemn awakening, that we have only followed after lying vanities, and forsaken

* 1 JOHN II. 15. † TIM. VI. 9, 10. † 1 COR. XII. 7.

our own mercies; and that the things wherein we have placed our delight and trust, will terminate in disappointment, vanity, and vexation of spirit.

What then will avail all the lucrative acquisitions, the flattering connections, and dissipating pleasures of the world, with all its friendships, fashions, and follies, the direct tendency whereof is to draw away the mind, and alienate it from the love and fear of God, and centre it at last in his deep displeasure?

Seek day by day for that spiritual bread that perisheth not, that your strength may be frequently renewed, and your souls invigorated to pursue the paths of piety and virtue; and we earnestly entreat you, be diligent in the attendance of your meetings, both on First-days and other days of the week: for slackness in this respect not only denotes weakness, but increaseth it, indisposeth the mind towards, and enfeebles it for, religious duty. And when you are assembled for the purpose of divine worship, be inwardly and reverently attentive to the great and awful object of adoration, the omnipresent and all-searching God. Let not your eyes be abroad upon others, and give not way to wandering thoughts. Sit not idle and unconcerned in time of silence, in expectation of instrumental help; but let your minds be singly exercised towards the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength. Wait to receive a touch of the live coal from the holy altar, that your offerings may ascend as sweet incense. "Quicken us," said the Psalmist, "and we will call upon thy name!" And the wise man testified, "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord."

And you, dear brethren, whose constant care it is not to live unto yourselves, but unto him who died for you; let nothing abate your concern, nor prevail to move you from your steadfastness. Though some fall by one temptation, and some by another, yet be not ye discouraged, but abide in faith, and "press earnestly forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Jesus Christ:"* for amidst all fluctuating storms, and tempests, the foundation of God standeth sure. Those who keep the word of his patience, shall be kept in the hour of temptation; and he that is faithful unto death, shall inherit a crown of life.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory

* PHIL. iii. 14.

“ and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.
 “ Amen.”*

Signed in and on behalf, and by order of our Meeting aforesaid,
by ROBERT DAVIS,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CV—1782.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In a good degree of that ancient love, and godly concern for the welfare of the church, which, from the beginning, have accompanied these our annual assemblies, we affectionately salute you; and have, with deep reverence and humble thankfulness, to acknowledge the gracious help divinely afforded us in this large and solemn meeting; whereby we have been enabled to transact the important affairs before us, in brotherly kindness and christian condescension.

By accounts brought in this year, the sufferings of Friends, being chiefly for tithes, those called church-rates, and the militia, amount in England and Wales, to three thousand seven hundred and twelve pounds; and those in Ireland, to one thousand two hundred and twenty-seven pounds.

By advices from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, we are informed that love and unity are generally preserved in the churches, to which some additions have been made in divers places by conviction, both in these parts and on the American continent, where the sufferings of Friends, on account of their adherence to our peaceable principles, appear to have increased; yet Friends are mercifully favoured to hold their religious meetings without interruption, and are also enabled to proceed in their charitable endeavours for the liberty of the African captives, with success.

Now, dear Friends; you who are sensible of the manifestations of divine grace in your hearts, yet remain unresigned to its salutary guidance, be entreated no longer to resist or avoid its convictions. Say not, with Felix, “Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” The longer you put it off, the more indisposed, it is to be feared, ye

* JUDE xiv. 25.

will be to attend thereunto, and the more unable to embrace its offers. None can assure themselves of another visitation, nor even of a future day; let the Lord's time, therefore, in all things, be yours, and expect not that he should wait your leisure. We are in duty bound to love, honour, and obey him above all. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."* Can any, who are properly concerned to discharge this first and great duty, prefer the gratification of their own wills, or inclinations, to the requirings of God's Holy Spirit, or put a slight upon his gracious calls, upon whom all our felicity, both in time and in eternity, depends? Though he may, in mercy, vouchsafe to renew his visitations to us, we ought not to presume upon it, but to remember he hath declared, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."† Notwithstanding a season is afforded, wherein backsliders may return, and be healed of their backslidings; yet by unwisely persisting in delays, the time may overtake them, when no more calls may be afforded, nor any place of repentance shall be found. Let us, therefore, lay hold of the present opportunity; "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." ISAIAH lv. 6.

We may likewise observe, it is but too probable, that many who, in time past, received the truth in a degree of the faith and love of it, and made some progress in the necessary work of regeneration, yet, for want of keeping their eye in due singleness to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, have suffered the allurements of a deceitful world to steal in upon them; whereby they have been retarded in their course, and at length prevailed with to take up a rest short of what they might otherwise have attained; and though such may think well of their own state, yet, as they come not up in that liveliness of faith, and brightness of example, requisite to render them true way-marks to serious inquirers and inexperienced travellers towards the heavenly Canaan, they cannot be deemed clear of contributing to that lamentable declension, which too obviously appears amongst us. Let every one, therefore, be excited to a diligent search how the case stands betwixt God, and their own souls, and apply to him with fervency of heart, for the removal of every obstruction to their advancement in the way of life, and the important work of their salvation.

It is incumbent upon all to work out their own salvation whilst the day of divine visitation is continued to them, for therein the Lord waits to be gracious; who, as we yield to his operation,

* MAT. xxii. 37.

† GEN. vi. 3.

worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. We beseech you, suffer not the precious opportunity to pass over your heads, but use all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Neglect no season of spiritual improvement. Be not remiss in the attendance of your meetings, either on First-days, or on other days of the week, and therein watch and wait humbly with a single eye to the springing up of the well of life in your own hearts; which is as a refreshing brook to the rightly exercised in their travel Sion-ward. The sensible reception of this internal heavenly life, whether immediately or instrumentally conveyed, is that which strengthens the weak hands, confirms the feeble knees, and enables the wrestling seed to hold on their way. The best of words without this, are but as the tinkling of a cymbal, unsubstantial and unprofitable. The itching ear may find a transient amusement in them, but unless testimonies arise from the life, and are accompanied therewith, they administer no true feeding to the soul that hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of God.

And, dear brethren, as nothing can make us alive to God, but the Spirit of God, let us inwardly seek unto him day by day, for the lively ministration thereof to our souls, by our Lord Jesus Christ, the great minister of the sanctuary, who said, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."* Be neither satisfied with the vain hopes, nor the delusive enjoyments of this world: for this is not our rest; it is only a state of passage and probation, ever attended with fluctuations and trials: consequently our principal business here, is to endeavour after preparation for an infinitely better, and more enduring state hereafter, with the general assembly of the just, and church of the first-born written in heaven.

In order to attain this happy conclusion, let all, in every station of life, be careful to avoid every thing that may have a tendency to lead their minds from that divine principle which God hath placed in the heart of every individual, as a swift and sure witness against all unrighteousness and ungodliness, and for a justifier and comforter to the believing and obedient. Receive with meekness this ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls. Touch not, ye beloved youth, with those corrupt publications which are calculated to excite and inflame the passions, nor give ear to those subtle reasonings, and plausible discourses, which artfully instill the poisonous leaven of infidelity. As much as possible shun all converse and correspondence with the licentious; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,

* LUKE xi. 9.

but rather reprove them. Abhor that which is evil: cleave to that which is good.

And, dear Friends; seeing that the various distresses of the present day are very trying to many, we affectionately exhort every individual, under a sense of their own insufficiency and unworthiness, humbly to look unto the Lord omniscient, with stedfast resignation to him, the Father of mercies, and sure support of all that yield obedience to him, and trust in him. Let us not murmur at his dispensations, nor seek our own wills, but that his righteous will may be done, who faileth not to sanctify every kind of trouble to those who love and fear him. If he bring suffering upon us, it is for our refinement, that we may not become castaways. "When we are judged," saith the apostle, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."* In the midst of judgment the Lord remembers mercy; let all therefore, who may be under affliction of any kind, wait in submission the time of his gracious deliverance: for "it is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." LAM. iii. 26.

"Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Amen. JUDE 24, 25.

Signed in, on behalf, and by order of our Meeting aforesaid, by

SAMPSON LLOYD,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CVI—1783.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We have renewed cause of humble thankfulness to the God and Father of all our mercies, for the gracious assistance he hath vouchsafed to afford us, in transacting the weighty concerns of this large and solemn assembly, whereby we have been preserved in much brotherly love and condescension; and under a comfortable sense of the love of the gospel, we dearly salute you, earnestly desiring that it may be the constant care of every individual, in lowliness and meekness daily to seek an increase in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.

* 1 COR. xi. 32,

By accounts brought in this year, the sufferings of Friends, being principally for tithes, those called church-rates, and the militia, amount in England and Wales to four thousand three hundred and forty-one pounds; and those in Ireland, to one thousand three hundred and seventy-seven pounds.

By advices from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, we understand that Friends appear to be generally preserved in love and unity; that divers have been added to our society in various parts by convincement, more especially on the continent of America, where many have been conscientiously led to unite in religious fellowship with us: and though deep have been the exercises, and painful the sufferings, of our faithful brethren on that continent since the commencement of the late troubles, yet it yields a considerable degree of comfort to find, that many amongst them have been thereby induced to a stricter adherence to the living principle of true piety and virtue, manifested in every heart and conscience, in order to their help and salvation.

We also find, that notwithstanding the sufferings of Friends there, in divers respects, still remain to be very exercising, yet that they have been favoured to attend their annual and other meetings, without much interruption; that a lively concern increaseth amongst them for the performance of every religious and moral duty, and the support of our christian testimony in its several branches; and that their fervent labour for the restoration of the poor enslaved Africans to their due liberty, is still continued; which we cannot but highly approve, and concur with them in, as it is for the removal of an oppression supported by cruelty for the sake of a corrupt interest, in direct opposition to the spirit and precepts of the gospel, and even repugnant to humanity.

Now, dear brethren, seeing it hath pleased the supreme disposer of events, mercifully to incline the powers lately at war to put a stop to the effusion of human blood, let us thankfully receive the return of peace; and, in all our conversation and conduct, demean ourselves as becomes the followers of Christ, the prince of peace, labouring to promote the good of all, and, as much as in us lies, putting in practice that comprehensive exhortation of the apostle, "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our

“Saviour, who would have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”*

The will of God being thus universally gracious towards mankind, it is much to be lamented, that any should fail of giving due attention to the law he writes in the heart, and the spirit he puts in the inward parts, or consciences of all, for their guidance in the way of life and salvation; and we cannot but be deeply concerned to observe the manifest deficiency that appears in many professing with us, in coming up in faithful obedience to this divine, inspeaking word; which, if duly regarded, would unquestionably both lead and enable them to shew forth the faith of the gospel, by works answerable thereunto. But, alas! it is apparent, that the self-denial to which this principle of conviction leads, is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to the carnal inclinations of those who either seek to avoid, or who resist, its salutary admonitions and reproofs. But let us consider, that whatsoever modes of faith we profess, or whatever acts of religion we exercise ourselves in, we can never be true christians without submission to the cross: for, said our Lord, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me: whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” LUKE ix. 23.—xiv. 27.

A due subjection to the cross, would have timely prevented many from bringing great trouble and reproach upon themselves and their friends, by entering into concerns which they either have not properly understood, or had not sufficient property of their own to enable them to discharge themselves in, with good reputation: it would also lead those under wasting and deficient circumstances, to avoid all indirect measures for a temporary support, and rather to give up their effects in due time, than to go on enlarging their debts by disreputable artifices, until they are stopped by unavoidable necessity, and plunged at once into ruin, sorrow, and disgrace; with the painful addition of bringing their just creditors into grievous inconveniencies, and some in great danger of sinking with them in the wreck of their affairs.

Let none amongst us, therefore, indulge an evil covetousness, nor vainly seek to vie in appearance with those of greater ability; but wisely submit to the cross, which will dispose all to be content with a manner of living within their own compass, agreeable to the doctrine of our holy head; an honest conformity whereunto, will be conducive to inward peace and tranquility here, and to everlasting felicity hereafter.

* 1 TIM. ii.

Finally, dear Friends; we affectionately intreat you, who have been sincerely concerned to follow Christ in the regeneration, whereby ye have been enabled to walk as good examples to others, hold fast that which you have, and still press forward, with a single eye to the spirit of truth, that nothing may be suffered to prevent your attainment of that blessed promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." REV. ii. 7.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the said Meeting, by

WILLIAM TUKE,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CVII—1784.

Dear Friends,

Under a renewed sense of the continuation of divine regard freely dispensed from the Father and fountain of all our mercies, a living remnant hath been bowed in humility and thankfulness of heart in this our solemn assembly, wherein the affairs that have come before us have been considered and concluded in harmony and brotherly condescension, and our hearts enlarged in love to our holy head and high priest, and one unto another; in the fresh sense whereof we affectionately salute you, desiring you may be so preserved through life, that you may receive the reward of the righteous at the end of your days.

By accounts brought in this year, the sufferings of Friends, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount in England and Wales to four thousand three hundred and twenty pounds; and those in Ireland to one thousand three hundred and forty-nine pounds.

By advices from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, Long-Island for New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, we are informed that Friends are generally preserved in love and unity, and that some addition is made to the church by conviction. And, being impressed with a comfortable hope that the beneficent Creator, notwithstanding the prevailing dissipation of a degenerate age, is looking down upon the noblest part of his visible creation with a gracious

eye, and by the influence of his Holy Spirit exciting in many hearts the serious inquiry, "Who will shew us any good?"* An ardent desire is revived in our minds on behalf of our dear brethren and sisters in the profession of an inward and spiritual religion; that the pure influence of the spirit of truth may become the object of their constant attention, and the rule of their conduct. If ye believe in the light, walk in the light, that ye may be the children of the light, and so be instrumental in drawing many who are seeking rest to their souls, from unprofitable outward observations, to an acquaintance with the kingdom of God as revealed within them. But will not such as are secretly revolting from this divine law, and whose conversation discovers a manifest opposition to our holy profession, become stumbling-blocks to serious inquirers after the way to the kingdom, and be the mean of turning them aside with the discouraging reflection, "where is their God."†

The christian religion being designed to regulate and refine the natural affections of man, and to exalt benevolence into that charity which promotes peace on earth, and good will towards all ranks and classes of mankind the world over; under the influence thereof, our minds have been renewedly affected in sympathy with the poor enslaved Africans; whom avarice hath taught some men, laying claim to the character of christians, to consider as the refuse of the human race, and not entitled to the common privileges of mankind. The contempt in which they are held, and the remoteness of their sufferings from the notice of disinterested observers, have occasioned few advocates to plead their cause. The consideration of their case being brought weightily before the last Yearly Meeting, Friends were engaged to recommend endeavours for putting a stop to a traffic so disgraceful to humanity, and so repugnant to the precepts of the gospel. The report of the measures adopted in execution thereof, hath afforded comfort and satisfaction to this meeting; and it hath been our concern to recommend to our Friends, to whose care this business is committed, to persevere in all prudent exertions for attaining the desirable end. And it is our earnest desire, that none under our name may weaken or counteract our endeavours by contributing, in any way, to the support of this iniquitous commerce.

Although the advices from this meeting upon the weighty subject of education, and the religious care which ought to rest on the minds of Friends for the training up of their children and families in the way of truth, have been manifold and important (which we wish may be closely attended to in proportion to the

* PSAL. iv. 6.

† PSAL. lxxix. 10.

interesting nature of the subject), yet we feel it our present concern to caution Friends, to be very circumspect how they remove themselves and families from the places of their residence; it having been observed that the dissolving of old and the forming of new connections, have in many instances been attended with effects prejudicial to a growth in the truth, and the service thereof, both in the heads and younger branches of families, especially where the inclination to such removals hath originated in worldly motives. And as the growth and establishment of children in a religious conversation, being the most interesting, ought to be the principal engagement of the minds of parents, we desire that in putting them forward in a way of life, the probable effect it may have on their minds be the chief object in view. For where parents, from a desire of advancing their children in the world, have encouraged them, or the youth, from the flattering prospect of greater opportunities of accumulating wealth, have incautiously been induced, to quit their quiet habitations in country places, to crowd to cities and great towns, it hath been frequently of pernicious consequence: for although no situation in life be exempt from temptation, yet examples of folly, dissipation, and libertinism, are so generally prevalent in places of opulence and luxury, that it hath caused deep anxiety to judicious observers, to remark the numerous instances of youth soberly educated, and of promising dispositions, who, losing the traces of their sober education, have been hurried into the paths of vanity and licentiousness, and have thereby lost that capacity for usefulness in civil and religious society, of which their earlier conduct had furnished promising hopes. We therefore recommend Friends, both young and old, in these cases, to give close attention to the pointings of divine wisdom, according to former advice, and also timely to consult experienced Friends of the Monthly Meeting to which they belong, previously to their fixing a resolution of changing their situation.

Dear Friends, let us frequently call to mind, that we have no continuing city here; and let the reflection, through divine influence, awaken us from every degree of spiritual indolence, to use all diligence to make our calling and election sure, before we go hence, and be seen of man no more. Few and fleeting are the days we have to spend in this transitory world; yet how inconceivably important the consequence of the use we make of them, and of the manner in which we suffer them to pass over! Whilst we believe in a future state, and in the distribution of everlasting rewards and punishments, according as our deeds have been, by that awful Judge of quick and dead, who even now standeth at the door, whose penetrating eye is ever beholding the

ways of the sons of men; may we not be justly deemed dead to all rational reflection, if, unawed by these awakening considerations, we do not feel ourselves powerfully incited to lay aside every weight and burden, and the sin that most easily besets us, to address ourselves in good earnest to the race that is set before us, running so as to obtain the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord? We beseech you, in the bowels of tender compassion, and that strength of true affection, which makes your greatest happiness the lively concern of our minds at this time, to arise and shake yourselves, to examine deeply the state of your hearts, and ponder the path of your feet, whilst the day of your visitation is mercifully lengthened out, and you are favoured with the opportunity, by joining in with the offers of divine grace, to work out your salvation: put not off this most necessary work, till the dreadful sound, time shall be no longer, awaken you to the distressing reflection, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."*

It remains an everlasting truth, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,"† but the name of Jesus. This is the strong tower to which the righteous in all ages have fled and found safety: we entreat you therefore to live daily under the fresh influence thereof, experiencing your conversation to be thereby ordered aright: and in an especial manner, we desire that in all your religious assemblies, for discipline as well as worship, you may be engaged to gather in this holy name, waiting for renewed qualification to worship the Lord with acceptance; and to act in the church for his honour, and the health and benefit of the body. It was in the divine wisdom thus received, that the salutary discipline of the society was first established, and under the influence of the same wisdom, it can only be maintained to real edification.

And now, brethren and sisters, "we recommend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified;"‡ and bid you farewell.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

RICHARD CHESTER,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

* JER. viii. 20.

† ACTS iv. 12.

‡ ACTS xx. 32.

EPISTLE CVIII—1785.

Dear Friends,

Having been favoured in this our solemn assembly with the renewed influence of the power of truth, which nearly unites the living members of the spiritual household, however outwardly separated, we affectionately salute you. We have been comforted together under a renewed engagement of heart, for the welfare of our religious society, and for the preservation of its members, from those things that tend to obscure the brightness of our holy profession. Our deliberations on these important subjects have been conducted in much brotherly condescension, and we desire they may be blessed to your edification in righteousness.

By accounts brought in this year, the sufferings of Friends; being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount in England and Wales to four thousand four hundred and forty-eight pounds; and those in Ireland to one thousand four hundred and eighty-three pounds.

By advices from the several Quarterly Meetings in England, and by epistles from North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, Long-Island for New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, and Maryland, we have received comfortable intelligence that love and unity are generally preserved amongst Friends, and that divers have joined us by conviction in sundry places since last year.

The late accounts from our brethren in North-America inform us, that our christian testimony against holding our fellow creatures in bondage, not only continues to prevail and spread among those in religious profession with us, but that some of the governments have gone so far, as to pass laws for the discouragement and gradual abolition of slavery. We therefore find our minds renewedly engaged to refer you to our former advices on this subject; and as the slave-trade, whereby such multitudes of the human race are violently subjected to a state so abject and deplorable, is extensively carried on by persons resident in these kingdoms, we earnestly exhort all in profession with us, not to defile themselves by having any concern whatever in this unrighteous traffic; from which, if persisted in, very distressing consequences to this nation and its dependencies may be justly apprehended. We trust that a faithful conscientious discharge of the duties, which a serious consideration of the subject must necessarily suggest to every well disposed mind, may prove the

means, under the divine blessing, of exciting those, who have it in their power, to remove an evil so evidently repugnant to every principle of humanity and justice.

We feel at this time a renewed concern to address the elder brethren, and others who take an active part in the discipline, and, by the stations they occupy in the church, are placed in a conspicuous point of view, that we may stir up the pure mind in them, by way of remembrance; considering how important it is to the society in general, that they walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, in diligent circumspection and godly fear, keeping their own hearts and hands clean from the spots of the world; that so they may not administer cause of stumbling to any, but enforce the counsel they find necessary to impart to others, by their own example, that they may be enabled to say with the apostle, "Those things which ye have both learned and received, and seen and heard in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."*

And we beseech you, beloved youth, chuse the Lord for your portion, and the God of Jacob for the lot of your inheritance. We are comforted on your behalf, under a lively sense, that a merciful visitation of divine love is graciously extended to you, which we desire may prove effectual to your growth and establishment in the truth; and therefore, in much affection, we earnestly exhort you, render faithful obedience to the convictions of the Spirit of Christ in the secret of your own hearts; that you may experience preservation from the evils that are in the world, receive wisdom to discern, and strength steadily to pursue, those things which make for your present and everlasting peace. Despise not the day of small things, but watchfully regard every manifestation of the light in your consciences: by this the righteous in all ages have been safely guided to glory; and by this alone can you attain real advancement in the path that leads thereunto. Be on your guard against every thing that tends to draw the mind outward; by either too much depending on instrumental help, or imprudently disclosing your religious feelings in fruitless or unseasonable conversation. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope."† The rightly awakened, amongst our early predecessors, were much drawn to solitude and inward retirement, and therein were favoured to experience judgment brought forth unto victory, and admitted to "eat of the hidden manna." On the contrary, for want of patient submission to the turning of the Lord's hand upon

* PHILIP. iv. 9. † LAM. iii. 27.

them, even those who, in their tender years, afforded hope of becoming useful members in the church, may lose the dew of their youth, and become but withered branches, having received the grace of God in vain.

And as we cannot but feel deeply for the rising youth in general, amidst the dangers and temptations to which they are exposed, in an age so addicted to licentiousness both in principle and practice, and wherein much precious time is spent in a round of dissipation and excess; we are engaged, dear young Friends, earnestly to entreat you to live in the fear of the Lord, which will preserve you from delighting in the company and conversation of those who are estranged from this holy fear: from whom you may receive irrecoverable loss by being gradually drawn into the paths of folly and destruction. Frequent and earnest have been the advices of former Yearly Meetings, that all under our name may avoid the attendance of vain sports, and places of amusement, which divert the mind from serious reflection, and incline it to wantonness and vanity. Understanding that diversions of this kind are spreading, and play-houses increasing in various places, we are concerned to renew a caution on this subject: being clearly convinced of the pernicious effects of those evil practices, the inventions of degenerate men, tending to stifle the convictions of the divine witness in the conscience, and set men at ease in a state of alienation from God. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye
" separate; touch not the unclean thing,"* ever bearing in mind, that although "the young man may rejoice in his youth,
" and let his heart cheer him in the days of his youth, walking
" in the ways of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes, yet for
" all these things God will bring thee into judgment."†

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

THOMAS BLAND,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CIX—1786.

Dear beloved Friends and Brethren,

We have the satisfaction to inform you, that this our annual assembly hath been large; and, with reverence and gratitude, we acknowledge that it hath been favoured with the overshadow-

* 2 COR. vi. 17.

† ECCLES. xi. 9.

ings of that divine power and goodness which first gathered us to be a people; under the humbling influence whereof, the weighty affairs which came before us have been considered and issued in much brotherly love and concord.

The account of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount in England and Wales to four thousand one hundred pounds; and those in Ireland to one thousand two hundred and forty-three pounds.

By accounts from the Quarterly Meetings in England and Wales, and by epistles from North-Britain, Ireland, Holland, Rhode-Island for New-England, Long-Island for New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, we are informed that Friends are generally preserved in love and unity; and that divers have been added to our religious society by convincement since last year. We fervently desire all such may maintain a steady adherence to the dictates of that light and truth which first visited them, and thereby experience an establishment in righteousness. Thus will they be enabled to guard against settling down in a lifeless profession, as well as against those inconsistencies in conduct and appearance, whereby too many of the professors of truth have become as stumbling-blocks to honest inquirers, who have been asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward.

We have received intelligence from various quarters, that the testimony which we have borne against slavery, continues to gain ground; and we have great encouragement to persevere in our endeavours to excite a general abhorrence of that oppressive practice.

We observe with satisfaction, from the accounts received, that Friends are generally careful not to defraud the government in any branch of the revenue, nor to deal in goods clandestinely imported. In order to promote an increasing care in these respects, we entreat all duly to consider, that by being accessary, in any degree, to the continuance of such unlawful practices, even by buying for private use only, encouragement is given to perjury and blood-shed; the frequent attendants of smuggling: the fair trader is thereby injured, and the revenue diminished, which occasions additional burdens to be laid on the public.

We judge it expedient at this time to revive the following advice, contained in the epistle of 1759, viz. "This meeting being sorrowfully affected with the consideration of a great defection in some among us, from the practice of justice and morality, divers of whom, from negligence, inattention, or ill-grounded hopes, and others from motives of ambition, and an eager

pursuit after the world, have launched out of their depth, and entered into various schemes and branches of commerce beyond their abilities to manage, and some of them into scandalous practices to uphold a temporary credit; greatly to the reproach of our society, and in open contradiction to that principle of universal righteousness we profess, which taught our ancestors such conduct, as to extort a confession from their enemies, that respecting many of them, they could not find any occasion, unless concerning the law of their God.

And it is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that if any fall short of paying their just debts, and a composition is made with their creditors to accept of a part instead of the whole, notwithstanding the parties may look upon themselves legally discharged of any obligation to pay the remainder, yet the principle we profess enjoins full satisfaction to be made, if ever the debtors are of ability. And in order that such may the better retrieve their circumstances, we exhort them to submit to a manner of living in every respect the most conducive to this purpose, and correspondent to the state they are reduced to. It being exceedingly dishonourable for any to live in ostentation and greatness at the expence of others; which is certainly the case, where any part of the debts due by the law of equity and strict justice remains unpaid."

Many are the snares which the enemy of man's happiness is secretly laying to betray the unwary, and to obstruct the work of divine grace in the heart: we feel a religious concern for our fellow professors, that they may be preserved from every hurtful thing. And as this age of dissipation and of curious unprofitable inquiry, abounds with publications injurious to the cause of true religion, tending to fill the mind with vain notions and fruitless speculations, and to draw it from the plain discoveries of truth in the heart, and from an attention to the excellent truths and precepts of the gospel; we affectionately caution all, and particularly those who have in any degree experienced the operation of the divine word, to live under its holy influence; depending solely thereon, and not leaning to their own understandings: ever bearing in mind, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 COR. ii. 14.

As the Lord hath been graciously pleased to renew the visitations of his love unto the inhabitants of this land, and to awaken in the minds of many, a sense of the want of his saving help, raising in them an inquiry after the knowledge of the truth; we beseech all in profession with us, carefully to examine whether

they are concerned to improve by the abundant labour bestowed so as to bring forth fruit answerable thereunto.

May the elders, and heads of families, consider the importance of the trust reposed in them, and by a watchful care over their own conduct, be qualified to instruct the beloved youth in the way of piety and virtue; that being good examples to them herein, they may, with authority, rebuke and exhort the unruly and disorderly walkers, and tenderly encourage every appearance of good.

Although a sorrowful deviation appears in many from that plainness in dress, and simplicity of life and manners, into which truth led our ancestors, and still leads all who follow it with unreserved obedience; yet we are comforted in the prospect of a return from this Babylonish captivity, and that many of the youth are learning of him, who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart." We entreat all these to dwell in the patience, remembering, that he that believeth shall not make haste. Thus will they know a growth in the root of life, and experience a gradual increase in spiritual knowledge, and an establishment upon Christ Jesus, the rock of ages, and by his power be formed a people to his praise!

And, dear Friends; that your true happiness may increase through faithfulness to divine requirings, and you thereby made more useful in the Lord's hand to promote the cause of truth in the earth; we recommend to all a diligent attendance of our religious meetings: it being necessary to our advancement in true religion and virtue, to be frequent in the exercise of waiting upon God, that our strength may be renewed in him, who is alone the sufficient help of his people. And as we daily stand in need of that wisdom which is profitable to direct, of whom should we ask it, but of God? and how can we ask aright, but by that assistance of his good Spirit, which is to be obtained by waiting upon him in humility and fear, with minds abstracted from the incumbering concerns of this life? Let not the smallness of numbers, nor the want of outward ministry, discourage any: place not your dependance on man, but on the Lord alone, who never fails to help those who put their trust in him, and who hath graciously assured us, "that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is in the midst of them." MAT. xviii. 20.

We apprehend, that the want of a right concern to discharge this important duty, hath been one great cause of the declension which appears in divers places, and of the falling away of many; concerning whom it may be said, as of Demas formerly, they have loved this present world. But be ye more and more en-

gaged to seek a better inheritance, not labouring for an increase of outward riches, which cannot be long enjoyed, but to lay up treasure in heaven, where the moth cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

In much brotherly love we affectionately salute you, and remain your Friends and brethren.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

RICHARD REYNOLDS,

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CX—1787.

Dear Friends

Under the enlivening influence of the love of Christ, our holy head and high priest, renewedly manifested in this our annual assembly, we dearly salute you: wishing an increase of spiritual blessings to his church and people, wherever scattered abroad, in all their various stations and allotments. We have with reverent thankfulness to acknowledge, that, according to his wonted goodness, he hath at this time afforded us a comfortable season together, and hath strengthened us to conduct the affairs which have come before us, in much harmony and concord, to our mutual edification and encouragement. And we fervently desire that the influence of his unerring spirit may be more and more waited for in all our assemblies, that under the religious concern proceeding therefrom, our several endeavours for the promotion of his cause, may, through his blessing, be rendered effectual.

The accounts of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, being chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, amount in England and Wales, to four thousand eight hundred and sixty-five pounds; and those in Ireland to one thousand three hundred and seventy-six pounds. It is with satisfaction we observe, that notwithstanding the inattention manifested by some under our name to this important branch of our christian testimony, it has gained considerable ground in North-America, where our brethren, in common with others, have mostly been released from ecclesiastical impositions.

We have also thankfully to believe, there is a growing attention in many, not of our religious society, to the subject of negro-slavery; and that the minds of the people are more and more enlarged to consider it as an aggregate of every species of evil;

and to see the utter inconsistency of upholding it by the authority of any nation whatever; especially of such as punish, with loss of life; crimes whose magnitude bears scarce any proportion to this complicated iniquity.

By accounts received from our several Quarterly Meetings, and by epistles from Ireland, Holland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland and Virginia, we are informed that there is a revival of religious zeal in many places; and that a considerable number have joined the society by conviction since last year.

These accounts, together with some others which have been received, have afforded us comfort; yet we are sorrowfully affected in perceiving so great a declension in some, from that simplicity and uprightness by which our predecessors were so eminently distinguished; and also with the worldly-mindedness, carnal ease, and security, in which others appear to be settled; who contenting themselves with a nominal profession of membership, or a form of godliness, are not solicitous for an acquaintance with its living virtue and saving power: forgetting that if we truly succeed those sons of the morning, as witnesses for the truth on earth, the same spirit which influenced their minds must actuate ours, and fit us to support the testimonies given us to bear. Without this, our profession will degenerate into formality, or be openly sacrificed to the mammon of unrighteousness; and then, of however high account our works may be, in our own estimation, or that of others, at the hour of awful decision, and in the unerring balance of the sanctuary, we shall assuredly be found wanting. We therefore feel our minds deeply engaged, in the bowels of fervent charity, to entreat such to enter, with humility and self-abasement, into an intimate acquaintance with the state of their own hearts, by attending to the testimony of the faithful witness which God hath placed in every man's conscience, that by earnestly applying to him, on whom effectual help is laid, the end of their faith may be received, even the salvation of their souls. Suppress not then, dear Friends, the smallest intimation from this precious gift, designed by its blessed author, to steer us through the dangers of time, to an unfading inheritance in a blissful eternity; but stand open to its convictions, and patiently wait therein, to receive strength to subject your wills to its manifestations. So will your faith in its operation and influence be increased; and as you are obedient to its discoveries, and therein follow on to know the Lord, you will have, with his gathered flock, to acknowledge, that the intelligence of this inward monitor is more safely to be depended upon.

than any outward instruction, and thereby be preserved from the many snares and stratagems of the enemy; by which he is attempting to draw aside the inexperienced and unwary, suggesting to their minds, that there is an easier way to the kingdom than by the cross of Christ. Great, we fear, hath been the loss which many, who have been visited by the day-spring from on high, have sustained through their reasoning against these secret convictions of divine grace, counting them with Ephraim, as a strange thing, and seeking more to increase knowledge than to have the will of the creature subjected to the will of God. Hence they have gradually swerved from the divine government, laid themselves open to the subtle insinuations of the enemy, mistaken imagination for revelation, and at length frustrated the gracious purposes of the Almighty concerning them. Whereas, had they abode in patience and humility under the forming hand, depending, in child-like simplicity, on the heavenly instructor, for the gradual unfoldings of his counsel, they might have been instrumental in gathering others to the participation of substantial good. Earnest are our desires for the beloved youth, that they may receive caution from these mis-steppings of others, and by watchfully attending to the voice of pure wisdom, not only be preserved themselves, but be way-marks to others in the new and living way, which of God is cast up for the redeemed to walk in. And it is our renewed concern to advise Friends to be vigilant in preventing the introduction of such books into their families, as, by vitiating the taste and polluting the mind, either incline it to folly and licentiousness, or tend to fill it with airy notions; shaking its belief in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and lessening that regard to his blessed precepts, which their unspeakable importance requires.

Of the Lord's people formerly it was said, they should dwell alone, and not mix with the surrounding nations; so we are persuaded our safety and prosperity in spiritual experience, under this last and highest dispensation of gospel light, depends much on refraining from such connections and engagements in the world, as divert the mind from a state of lowliness and watchful dependance (against which, as against Israel abiding in their tents, neither divination nor enchantment is suffered to prevail) and lead also from that simplicity of life and conversation, in which, our wants being few and our desires bounded, we may be preserved from the temptation, into which some in profession with us have so disgracefully fallen, of supporting a vain shew of affluence and grandeur, at the expence, and to the certain injury of others.

Our advices on the subject of a religious education have been

frequent; yet as it is so extensively important, we still feel it the weighty concern of our minds, to endeavour to stir up the attention of Friends to this great object; and we beseech all parents and heads of families, to watch with a godly jealousy over themselves, and in gospel love over their dependants, as stewards to whom is intrusted the care of immortal souls. In order then, dear Friends, that your accounts of this trust may be rendered with reverent hope of divine acceptance, we counsel you to take every suitable opportunity of cultivating in the tender minds of your offspring, the plant which our heavenly Father hath planted, and to suppress, as far as in you lies, whatever you are sensible springs from the root of evil: avoiding in your own conduct and appearance, every thing which may be hurtful for them to imitate, or cause them to stumble.

And, dear youth; as we have cause to believe a considerable number among you are sensible that the visitation of our heavenly Father's love is afresh extended, and in a particular manner to those of your rank, we tenderly exhort you to give diligent attention to it. Many are the dangers to which you are exposed, and much depends on the connections you form in the early stages of life. The impressions you then receive may grow into habits of good or evil, by which your future peace and comfort may be much increased or lessened. Let perfect obedience then be your aim; and although, as you labour after it, the Lord may see meet to exercise you in small things, despise them not: for as his will is there most clearly revealed, where that of the creature is most fully subjected, our submission in small things may often be a more acceptable sacrifice in his sight than in matters which, to our own wisdom, may appear greater.

Finally, brethren, in the words of the apostle, "we beseech you, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind."* But "as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."†

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOSEPH STORRS,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

* 2 THESS. ii. 2.

† COL. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

EPISTLE CXI—1788.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In that love which is not subject to change, we affectionately salute you. We have abundant cause to acknowledge the renewal of divine help and counsel to us, in this our large annual assembly, through the virtue and influence whereof, we have been enabled to attend to the weighty concerns which have come before us, in much brotherly love and concord.

The amount of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, for tithes, those called church-rates, and other demands with which we conscientiously scruple to comply, amount in Great-Britain, to upwards of five thousand one hundred pounds, and in Ireland, to one thousand five hundred pounds.

By the accounts received from our several Quarterly Meetings, and by epistles from Ireland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina and Georgia, we have the comfortable intelligence of fresh additions to our religious society, by convinced persons, and in these kingdoms more than at some former periods. For the religious progress of these we are warmly solicitous, that, by abiding closely under the forming hand, they may effectually experience an advancement in the weighty work of conversion; which gradually leads the believing and obedient soul into that child-like state, which is meet for the kingdom. May those who have had the privilege of birth-right amongst us, be watchful, lest, by swerving from the simplicity in which truth leads its faithful followers, they become cause of offence to such as are thus brought into our religious community. O Friends! rest not contented with having been educated in a profession even of the truth itself, but wait to know the power, which regenerates and quickens the soul, and qualifies to see the things which pertain to the kingdom of God; that power which awakened the spiritual senses of our forefathers, which disturbed their rest in outward forms, and which caused them to be dissatisfied with every thing short of the substance of christianity. Let not us, their successors in the profession of the same living faith, degenerate into formality, taking up our residence as in the outward court; but let us seek after an entrance into that spiritual temple, where true prayer is wont to be made; and humbly and deeply wait for ability to worship the Father of Spirits, in spirit and in truth. Cherish, we beseech you, the inward manifestations, and the tender impressions of divine grace, and walk

therein : so shall ye experience preservation from the defilements and corruptions of the world. Deplorable hath been the consequence of living above the simple discoveries of the pure word of life in the heart, even darkness, error, and unbelief.

And, dear Friends; as we are convinced that pure and spiritual worship only is acceptable to God, so we are also firmly persuaded that the wholesome discipline established amongst us, can only be rightly and effectually exercised in the wisdom and power of the Spirit. Wait therefore in all your meetings of discipline for the renewings of divine life, and to be clothed with the Spirit of Christ : the fruits of which are meekness, long-suffering, and love unfeigned.

The religious concern of this meeting hath been abundantly manifested in our epistolary communications from year to year, in order to excite our brethren in profession to seek after durable riches and righteousness. We therefore earnestly entreat that this consideration may take place in every mind : What spiritual advantage have I experienced from these gospel labours of the church for the promotion of true piety and self-denial ? If such a consideration be attended to, it will not be necessary to communicate much ; nor do we feel our minds under an engagement at this time to enlarge ; but we refer to the many profitable and weighty advices in former epistles. Nevertheless, dear Friends, the continuance of covetousness and of earthly-mindedness in many, calls upon us to endeavour to awaken such as are infected with it, to a sense of what they are pursuing, and at what price. The great master hath shewn the unprofitableness of the whole world, compared with one immortal soul, and yet many are pursuing a delusive portion of it, at the expense of their souls' interests. But were all thus awakened, what place would be found for extensive schemes in trade, and fictitious credit to support them ? To mix with the spirit of the world in the pursuit of gain, would then be a subject of dread ; and contentment under the allotment of Providence, the sure mean of preservation.

The increasing solicitude for the suppression of the slave trade, which appears among all ranks of people, is cause of thankfulness to the common Father of mankind ; and encourages us to hope, that the time is approaching when this nation will be cleansed from that defilement. Let us, in the mean time, continue with unabating ardour, to be intercessors for the greatly injured Africans.

We conclude with expressing our comfort, that, notwithstanding the many weaknesses which prevail, numbers of our beloved youth are preserved in faithfulness, to whom the gracious Lord hath extended, and is continuing to extend, the visitations of his

light and love; whereby there is reason to hope, that they will grow up in usefulness, and become a succession of testimony-bearers to the truth. That they may in all humility receive the saving help, and, by obedience to the pointing of the divine hand, continue stedfast to the end, where the prize inestimable is to be obtained, is the fervent travail of our spirits.

Signed in and on behalf of the said Meeting, by

WILLIAM JEPSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXII—1789.

Dear Friends,

Under the continued extension of heavenly regard, with which this our large and solemn assembly hath been favoured, we affectionately salute you; wishing grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, may increase and abound in the churches.

The accounts of Friends' sufferings brought in this year, principally for tithes and those called church-rates, amount in England and Wales to five thousand one hundred pounds, and in Ireland to one thousand two hundred and forty seven pounds. Two Friends were last year imprisoned for refusing to find substitutes in the militia; and one Friend hath been this year committed to prison, by process in the ecclesiastical court on account of tithes, and still remains a prisoner.

We earnestly desire that this branch of our christian testimony may continue to be maintained in such meekness and consistency of conduct, as may evince to others that we are not actuated by selfish motives, but by a sense of our duty to Christ our Lord, are made willing to suffer for his cause; believing that those, who profess to be his ministers and servants, are bound to the observance of the command delivered by him to his disciples formerly, "Freely ye have received, freely give;"* to which a forced maintenance, on any pretence whatsoever, is plainly contradictory; as well as utterly inconsistent with the benevolence and dignity of the gospel, which holds forth the mercy and salvation of God to our acceptance, without money and without price.

By accounts from our several Quarterly Meetings, and by epis-

* MAT. x. 8.

tles from Ireland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Virginia, and North and South Carolina and Georgia, we are informed, that love and unity generally subsists among Friends; and that divers persons have been joined to the society by conviction.

We are concerned at this time to press upon your consideration the awful duty of pure and spiritual worship. It is not enough that, after the example of our forefathers, we meet together in one place, in outward silence; rejecting those forms and ceremonies which were invented by the wisdom, as well as that worship which is performed only in the will of man; it is not enough that, with a commendable diligence, we attend all our religious meetings; unless also like them we wait in humble reverence, for spiritual ability to worship acceptably the Lord of heaven and earth. Wait therefore, dear Friends, humbly and diligently wait in the spirit of your minds, for the coming of him who told his disciples "without me ye can do nothing;"* that ye may happily experience the influence of his Spirit to enlighten and quicken the soul to a true sight and sense of its condition; that feeling the spirit of supplication ye may approach the throne of grace, and under a renewed sense of the Father's mercy and goodness, may be enabled to offer the sacrifice of praise. This living and spiritual worship is ever acceptable, and draws down his favour on those who are thus humbly exercised before him.

Being thus qualified to worship together the Father of Spirits, to "eat of the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual "drink," our love to the pure truth, and to each other, will increase. The preservation of love is a duty in every state of religious attainment, and did we faithfully observe the great Master's precept of doing to others as we would they should do to us, its practice would be easy: detraction and enmity would then be destroyed in the seed, and that excellent christian charity, recommended by the apostle, prevail over all. "A new commandment," said our Lord, "I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."†

We exhort all parents, and those who have youth under their care, deeply to seek the Lord for themselves, and, feel after his baptizing power, that their own spirits being rightly leavened, may, through divine help, be made instrumental to leaven the minds of their tender connections, and the branches of their families; whereby there may be a growth in the spiritual life,

* JOHN XV. 5.

† JOHN XIII. 34, 35.

and a succession of living, baptized members in our religious society.

Such members as have the spiritual welfare of the professors of the blessed truth at heart, are pained in beholding the deviation of many amongst us, from that purity of life and conversation, and that plainness and simplicity of manners, into which the holy principle that we profess ever leads its followers. This deviation is apparent not only in the dress, but in the address and deportment of too many of our youth and others. O that our beloved youth would happily submit to the tender impressions of divine grace, often made on their minds in the early part of life; and that they would, by inward retirement, cherish and cultivate the precious and heavenly visitations, graciously renewed to their spirits, as they advance in age; so would that eye be kept open in them, which discerns the beauty and excellency of the gospel of Christ, and that a possession in his saving truth infinitely excels all the profits and honours; the favour and friendship, of a fading and delusive world.

We earnestly recommend to all, the frequent perusal of the Holy Scriptures, according to repeated exhortations; and we at this time also recommend the writings of our faithful predecessors, and the accounts that are published of their experiences, labours, travels and sufferings in the cause of Christ. Those hours of leisure would be profitably employed in this manner, which are often wasted in reading the light and trivial publications, calculated to gratify the vain imagination, and to feed that disposition that is always hankering after some new thing.

It is with particular satisfaction we observe the spreading of those principles of justice, which have long bound us to the cause of the injured Africans, and have now engaged the attention of distinguished persons in this nation, and not in this nation only; and that the inhuman trade is at length manifesting its iniquity to the view of our legislature:

“Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”*

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

JOHN ELIOT,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXIII—1790.

Dear Friends,

In the tender love of our most gracious and holy helper, we affectionately salute you; and have in humble thankfulness to inform you, that we have been favoured to hold this our annual assembly to a good degree of satisfaction: having, in the various sittings thereof often witnessed a measure of divine love to be the covering of our spirits.

The sufferings of Friends, on account of their religious principles, brought in this year, being principally for tithes and those demands called church-rates, in England and Wales, amount to five thousand six hundred and ninety-two pounds; and in Ireland to one thousand five hundred and sixty-eight pounds. The Friend who was imprisoned for his conscientious testimony against the support of an hireling ministry is since released.

By accounts at this time received from the Quarterly Meetings in England, from North-Britain, and from Wales, and by epistles from Ireland, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland and Virginia, we have information; that love and unity are generally preserved in our religious society, and that a considerable number, who were not educated amongst us, have been admitted into membership with us, through conviction since last year.

As the cause of the oppressed Africans is now before the legislature, we have no particular advices on that head to communicate; yet we desire Friends may continue united in a fervent concern, that the reproach of a traffic so iniquitous, may be done away from the christian name, and the day spoken of by the Lord's prophet be happily hastened, "for from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering."*

Friends! high and holy is the profession which we are making to the world. Many who do not openly profess with us, are yet persuaded in their consciences that the inward principle which we, according to the Holy Scriptures, hold forth to the world, is truth, though the cross stands in the way of their public avowal of it. May none of us act as enemies to the cross of Christ, and be stumbling-blocks in the way of sober and unpre-

* MALACHI i: 11.

judiced inquirers, hurting and hindering, by our outward appearance and practice, the success of that cause which we are called to espouse and promote.

And as we have received information of the removal of many faithful Friends from the field of labour, we greatly desire that the rising generation may lay it to heart, and come up with unreserved dedication of soul to the support and promotion of the cause of vital christianity, according to their several gifts and measures; not only by promulgating its salutary and blessed doctrines and precepts, but by being also living examples of their holy influence on the whole conduct and conversation: as becomes a people believing in the inward and spiritual appearance of Christ.

We hold that there is no need, no absolute necessity, that any man should teach us our religious duties, but as the same anointing which taught the primitive believers, teacheth us. We hold that no offering in worship is acceptable to our great Creator, but that which is produced by the motions of his own Spirit. And though it hath pleased Christ the head of the church, to raise up, qualify, and send forth able ministers amongst us, whose labours and ministration of the free gospel of Christ have been and are truly serviceable; yet the growth and preservation of every individual in true religion, can only be effected by every one deriving his spiritual supplies and abilities from the root of divine life; as Christ himself, when personally on earth declared, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me."* Let us therefore evince our belief in, and dependence upon, this inward instruction, this source of all right religious qualification, by a diligent attendance of our meetings for worship, and by a watchful patient waiting therein for divine succour, not only on the First, but on other days of the week. And as there has been a salutary discipline long established amongst us; for the preservation and edification of the body in love; and for the clearing of the reputation of our religious society from the scandal, which might arise from the disorderly walking of any professing with us; we entreat you to consider, that as we all should join in reverent worship of our common Father and Creator; so should we all unite in a religious care and oversight one of another for our mutual good; for indeed, "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."†

And, dear Friends; as there are great commotions on the earth, dissensions and animosities among men, and revolutions in states

* JOHN XV. 4.

† PSALM CXLIV. 15.

and kingdoms, let none of us be drawn by a party spirit to meddle with matters, which are unsuitable for the peaceable followers of the prince of peace; who declared that his kingdom was not of this world; but let us all be gratefully sensible of, and thankfully commemorate the gracious dealings and merciful interposition of the Lord our God; who hath extended his protection to us, though widely separated in our different allotments, and hath preserved us a religious body, united in faith and principle. May this precious unity and spiritual fellowship increase amongst us, by our living and believing in Christ, and by being justified by him, who is the author and finisher of all true faith.

Many are the different opinions as to religion in the world: let it not suffice us, dear Friends, that by education and tradition we are taught to believe that the principles which we profess, are no other than the doctrines of Christ; let us shew forth the soundness of our faith by our works; let us diligently wait for and feel after that divine virtue which renews the inward strength, and qualifies for every good word and work.

In the fresh renewing of gospel love, we commend you to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the alone preserver of men; beseeching you, in the words of the apostle, "That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

WILLIAM GROVER,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year,

EPISTLÉ CXIV—1791.

Dear Friends,

In that love which is the bond of religious fellowship, we affectionately salute you who profess the blessed truth, wherever scattered in your several allotments, and wish you health and salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Brethren, we write not to you, as matter of form, but as having our minds impressed with a renewed sense of the state of the church.

We have in humble gratitude to commemorate the continued

* EPH. iv. 1,

kindness of divine Providence, in enabling us once more to meet together, and to hold our annual assembly; which hath been large, and in a good degree owned by the gracious regard of him, without whom no religious act can be acceptably performed. Under a lively sense of the necessity of waiting for this holy help, and, we trust, under some experience of it, the affairs of our religious society have been transacted at this time.

The accounts of sufferings brought in this year, principally for tithes, and those called church-rates, in Great-Britain, amount to five thousand two hundred and eighty-four pounds, and in Ireland, to one thousand four hundred and ninety-one pounds. We greatly desire that all professing with us may see the nature and ground of our testimony for the free gospel of Christ, and against the great evil of endeavouring to make gain thereof; that so, being closely and feelingly united in principle and practice, all may be of the same mind, all speak the same thing.

We have received at this time accounts of the state of our religious society in this nation, and Ireland; and also epistles from New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia; whereby we are informed of the prevalence of love throughout the society, and that (notwithstanding the sorrowful declension of many professing with us) divers from time to time join it by conviction.

We find it our concern at this time to remind you, dear Friends, that though a sound form be requisite, it is essentially necessary that we should wait for a divine power to quicken and animate it. Our forefathers turned away from such as had a form of godliness, but who denied the power thereof. Let not us then, their successors in the same faith, settle down in formality, or rest content with any thing short of feeling the life and power of truth in our religious movements.

As a christian society we have found it our duty to promote the abolition of the slave-trade; and, although the legislature of this country hath not yet done away this evil, it still remains our steady concern to discourage so iniquitous a traffic: and, at the present affecting juncture, we think it particularly incumbent on every individual deeply to ponder his own particular share in the testimony, which we have so long believed it to be our duty to bear, and to be careful not to stifle the smallest conviction of duty: more especially that the prospect of gain may not lead any to countenance a trade, of which the immediate and unavoidable consequence is the miseries of men.

Inasmuch as we are sensible that the Lord Almighty is still graciously caring for, and visiting his church; and that his forming, qualifying hand, is preparing, and leading forth, many of the

rising generation into the service of the day; it is the earnest travail of our spirits, that these may be preserved in watchfulness, fidelity, and obedience. It is not enough that the eye hath been once opened to see the beauty and excellence, which are in the truth; it is not enough to have walked well for a time, or even to have been rightly engaged in some religious services: that eye may again close, and that capacity for service may decay. There is a necessity to follow on to know the Lord, and to experience the renewings of a right spirit, in order to be preserved in a state of safety, and of ability to labour in the cause of Christ. And may those who are advanced in years, and in religious growth, not trust to their former experiences of good, and to the sense and understanding which they have had in spiritual things; but may they diligently wait for the arising of that power in their hearts, which reneweth the mind, and preserveth in a freshness and liveliness of spirit, even in old age; that so they may have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. All are called to purity and holiness: without which, it is said, "no man shall see the Lord."*

Let us, beloved Friends, in the strength of gospel-love, entreat all, both old and young, to walk as becometh our high and holy profession; so that our christian simplicity of manners, uprightness of conduct, and universal charity, may answer the just witness in all; and that serious persons of other professions who are thoughtful about a future state, being induced, by observing our lives and conversation, to inquire into our principles, may, through the divine blessing on their honest and impartial search, be brought to the experience and acknowledgment of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

Be not discouraged by the smallness of numbers in any place, from attending with diligence your Week-day meetings. We need to have our spiritual strength often renewed, and it was esteemed by our forefathers and elders in the truth, to be a profitable as well as necessary duty. When any then are negligent in this part of our testimony, let it be the care of those who remain livingly sensible of the benefit of these opportunities, to stir up such to their duty: and let the deficient seriously consider, whether, by a neglect of this part of our religious duty, they are not in danger of gradually declining from a life of faith and holiness, and falling into evils which at present they may hold in abhorrence.

Finally, brethren, in the fresh feeling of that uniting love, which is the mark of discipleship; that universal love which reaches over sea and land, and anxiously desires the welfare and

* HEb. xii. 14.

happiness of the whole mass of mankind; in that love, and in the words of the apostle, "We commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."*

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

PHILIP DEBELL TUCKETT,

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CXV—1792.

Dear Friends,

Under a degree of that influence which alone qualifies the mind for being engaged in the cause of Christ, we affectionately salute you; desiring that you, and all men, may be "saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth."†

Through the continued mercy and favour of our great preserver, we are again met in our annual assembly, to inquire into the religious state of our society, to impart such counsel as may appear necessary, and thereby to endeavour to promote the good and glorious work of peace and righteousness: and, in attending to the subjects which have come before us, we have been favoured to experience the prevalence of brotherly love.

The accounts of sufferings received this year, chiefly for tithes, and other demands of a like nature, amount to five thousand two hundred and twenty-three pounds in Great-Britain; and to one thousand five hundred and forty-four pounds in Ireland.

By accounts from our Quarterly and other Meetings in these nations, and by epistles from New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas and Georgia, we find that a number is preserved who are concerned for the prosperity of truth, and that our salutary discipline is in a good degree maintained. We have also accounts of several having joined us since last year by conviction.

Repeated have been the calls of the church to the rising generation, and frequent her exhortations and admonitions: the elders having no greater joy, next to the sense of heavenly communication to their own spirits, than to hear that the children "walk in truth." Let us now, dear youth, with renewed solicitude, again expostulate with you, and entreat you to ponder those things

* ACTS xx. 32.

† 1 TIM. ii. 4.

which belong to your eternal welfare. Why should the transitory gratifications of this life....why should the fading splendour, or false friendship of the world, prevail to draw any of you away "from the simplicity that is in Christ:"* leading you into "many foolish and hurtful lusts,"† and unfitting your minds for the reception of those divine visitations, and those spiritual refreshments, which alone are worthy of the aspirations of an immortal soul? And you, beloved young Friends, who have set your hands to the plough, look not back. Though the Lord, in unerring wisdom, may yet allot you deeper baptisms, and more humiliating conflicts, flinch not under the operations of his love. So may ye be purified from every mixture of the creature, fitted for the work whereunto ye are called, and enabled to perform his heavenly commands in holy quietude.

Brethren, of every rank, be persuaded that our happiness, in time and in eternity, depends on pleasing God; and the apostle declares, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. For to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace."‡ Come therefore, beloved Friends, out of all those things which dim the prospect of the beauty and excellency which are in the truth; seek a possession in it above all visible enjoyments; flatter not yourselves with the fallacious expectation of being heirs of two kingdoms; but submit your hearts with total surrender, to the government of him, who declared, "My kingdom is not of this world."§

That national evil, the slave-trade, still excites our sorrow, and calls for our unremitted attention; but, although we have not yet seen the accomplishment of our ardent desire for its unconditional abolition, let us cherish a disposition to be thankful to the Father of ALL mankind, that the prospect opens of a termination to the wrongs of Africa.

Friends, let us bear in mind that "God hath called us to peace."|| It is a leading principle of our holy profession. Let us therefore, on all occasions, evince that we are what we profess to be. Let us not suffer our minds to be drawn after that in which it is not our duty to be engaged; much less let us attach ourselves to any party; but let us trust in that arm of divine power which hath been our only refuge, and without which there is no safety.

Although we are well aware, that "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain:"¶ and though we have repeatedly and recently recommended a diligent attendance

* 2 COR. xi. 3. † 1 TIM. vi. 9. ‡ ROM. viii. 6, 8. § JOHN xviii. 36. || 1 COR. vii. 15. ¶ PSAL. cxxvii. 1.

of meetings for worship on other days, as well as on the First-day of the week; yet as spiritual welfare depends on an experience of the saving virtue of truth, which alone makes "alive unto God,"* we renew our earnest exhortation that ye forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. O that the weightiness of our spirits, and the gravity of our deportment in religious meetings might be such as to excite an awful sensation in observers; and that, at their conclusion, we might avoid trivial or unnecessary conversation, our conduct, as well as countenances, bespeaking that we had been with Jesus!

We conclude with recommending you individually to the grace and good spirit in your own hearts (the sure guide to salvation), and to the diligent perusal of the Holy Scriptures, particularly of those in which is recorded an account of the life, doctrines and sufferings of our blessed Saviour; beseeching you reverently and humbly to walk according to that holy pattern, and deeply to bear in remembrance, that "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord."†

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

THOMAS HUNTLEY,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXVI—1793.

Dear Friends,

We salute you in gospel love, and in a degree of that humility, which a close inspection into the state of our religious society at this time, hath produced: for, although we may thankfully acknowledge that we have not found things in so neglected a condition, as in some former years; and some increasing concern appears to have invested the minds of many brethren, for the support of our testimonies; yet much remains to be done, and much laborious exercise of spirit to be patiently endured, before our Zion can become so eminently as we trust she is designed to be, the praise of nations. Friends! may every one of you, who may read or hear this our tender salutation, closely and effectually consider in what instance, and to what degree, he obstructs in his practice, the accomplishment of a design so gracious.

Our meeting hath been large, and through the mercy of our holy head and high priest, hath been favoured with the renewed

* ROM. vi. 11.

† MAT. x. 24.

assistance of his Spirit; and, although divers matters have occurred which have been subjects of considerable discussion, we have afresh experienced the prevalence of christian condescension.

The accounts of sufferings brought in this year, amount in Great-Britain; to six thousand and eighty pounds, and in Ireland, to one thousand six hundred and twenty-nine pounds. The largest part, as usual, is for those ecclesiastical demands with which we scruple actively to comply, as being the support of a ministry formed by the will of man; and not only inefficacious in combating the desires of the carnal mind (which, saith the Holy Scripture, is at enmity with God) but too generally made subservient to its purposes.

Our correspondence with our brethren in Ireland and on the continent of America, is maintained, and we have received epistles from all the Yearly Meetings, informing us of their concern for the cause of truth; and, in some of those from America, of their continued care to be, as opportunities offer, the advocates of the oppressed black people. The slow progress in this country of the cause of these our fellow-men we lament, but do not despair of its success: and we desire Friends may never suffer the cause to cool on their minds, through the delay, which the opposition of interested men hath occasioned, in this work of justice and mercy; but rather be animated to consider, that the longer the opposition remains, the more necessity there is, on the side of righteousness and benevolence, for steadiness, perseverance, and continued breathing of spirit to the God and Father of all, who formed of one blood all the families of the earth.

At our last Yearly Meeting, we were engaged to caution our members against suffering the voice of party to draw any of us from the stedfastness which we may possess in Christ; and now, when war is making its ravages in the adjacent nations, we are again concerned to exhort Friends, that on all occasions, they evince themselves to be indeed the followers of the prince of peace. As we profess to be restrained from joining in a practice so desolating to mankind, let us not indulge the spirit of it in ourselves, or encourage it in others, by making the events of war a frequent subject of conversation; but, so far as we are truly redeemed from those warring lusts in ourselves, to which the apostle ascribes its origin, let us, as enabled, be frequently engaged in secret supplication to the God of the spirits of all flesh, that it may please him to "break the bow, and cut the spear in sunder; making wars to cease unto the end of the earth;"* and

* PSAL. xlv. 9.

to enlist the nations under his holy banner, in opposition to those iniquities which are a reproach to the profession of christianity.

Many have been of late the overturnings and failures in the commercial world; and some amongst us have not escaped the disgrace. We desire these things may operate as a call to all of us, who may need the caution, to contract rather than to enlarge our plans for the acquisition of wealth. Let us sooner endeavour to secure a competency, by contracting our wants and limiting our desires; recollecting, that as Christ, our great example, declared his kingdom not to be of this world, so neither can his faithful followers make it the storehouse of their treasure. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by

GEORGE BRAITHWAITE,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXVII—1794.

Dear Friends,

A degree of that love which drew our predecessors from the various forms of religion, to wait upon the Lord, and to serve him in simplicity and holy fear, engages us afresh to salute you; desiring that ye may increase and abound in every good work; and that, as lights in the world, ye may so shine as to glorify our heavenly Father.

Our present assembly hath been very large; and we have, as usual, received accounts from the several branches of this meeting, and also epistles from our brethren on the American continent. The amount of sufferings brought in this year (chiefly for tithes and those called church-rates) is six thousand nine hundred and forty pounds in Britain, and one thousand six hundred and twenty-five pounds in Ireland. Here we may briefly remark, that as we believe no genuine minister of Christ can dare to traffic with the truths of the gospel, we are concerned fervently to exhort all Friends to be stedfast in maintaining the testimony

* MAT. vi. 12, 20, 21.

most surely given us to bear against this violation of the Spirit and letter of it.

We have been reminded, in this meeting, of such of our Friends as are in lonely situations, and few in number. We desire these may be concerned not to neglect their little meetings: but therein to wait upon the Lord, in whose presence there is life, and to have their expectations on him alone: considering, that his tender compassion is not only to the multitude, but descends even to the two or three gathered in his name. Let this indeed be encouragement to all, to persevere in the practice of assembling for the worship of God: and as all are in need of help from above, to strengthen them in the performance of their several duties; whether as parents, as heads of families, as children, or as servants; let us humbly trust that those who thus, in integrity of soul, honour him, and endeavour to walk before him with acceptance, will by him be honoured with his gracious assistance and support,

We find ourselves also engaged at this time, to caution all our fellow professors to watch, with close attention, against giving way to the unsubjected activity of their own spirits. Many there are, who although willing to confess the impotency thereof for promoting the spiritual welfare of men, are yet unwilling to submit it to the restraint of divine wisdom, in outward engagements. From this cause such have often failed in plausible pursuits, often brought reproach on our profession, often distress on themselves. Thus also some have been improperly led into speculative opinions on the affairs of this unstable world, and the commotions which rend it, very inconsistently with the purity and simplicity of our principles, and unbecoming those who profess to be subjects of the peaceable kingdom of Christ. Let not such indulge themselves in contention, even with their tongues. Follow peace with all men. Study to be quiet and to do your own business: remembering that the spiritual Jerusalem is a quiet habitation: and that to lead a holy, unblamable life among men, walking in the fear of the Lord, and according to the direction of that light wherewith he favours us, is to contribute, in the degree which he approves, to the advancement of true reformation in the earth.

Although we are still unable to rejoice in beholding an end to the sufferings of our African fellow-men, we continue to cherish a tender concern for their restoration to their proper rank in society. On the subject of the slave-trade being laid before us, a solemn pause ensued: and though no step appears expedient for us, at this juncture, to take as a body; we desire that every one of us may continue to sympathize with this afflicted people, and

endeavour to excite, in his respective sphere of acquaintance, a like compassion for their almost unparalleled sufferings.

Dear Friends; we have not any desire unprofitably to multiply words; but Oh, that we might be enabled to rouse the supine among us, of every age, and of every appearance, to the awful thought that they are not their own! Surely were this alarm effectually sounded in their ears, many who now gird themselves, go whither they list, and absent themselves when they list from an attendance on the Lord's service, would not only submit to be restrained by his fear, but would pray that his hand might not spare, or his eye pity, until a disposition was produced and established in them, to serve him in singleness of heart.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting,

JOSEPH GURNEY BEVAN,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXVIII—1795.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

In our common cause...the endeavour to promote, in our generation, the righteousness of Christ, by obedience to his Spirit operating in the heart...how awful is our profession; and what manner of men ought we to be, in all godliness and honesty, that our practice may correspond with it! Religion is not a speculative thing, but a practical duty; and, at this Yearly Meeting, we have been renewedly made desirous that our members may be more and more diligent in support of the testimonies which we believe ourselves bound, in our conduct, to bear to the world. Thus impressed, we tenderly salute you, and inform you, that we have reason to believe, from the examination that we have made into the state of our society, that the cause of truth gains ground; that the visitation of divine love continues to be extended, by faithfulness to which a growth in the truth is experienced; and, that our christian discipline is supported with increasing vigour.

The account of sufferings brought in this year, chiefly for tithes, priests' demands, and those called church-rates, amounts in Britain, to six thousand three hundred and eighty-one pounds; and in Ireland, to one thousand two hundred and ninety-two pounds. Seven members of our society are lately committed to prison, by an exchequer process, on account of our testimony against tithes. We wish their allotment may prove a call to those

among us, who do not come up with their brethren in this testimony, afresh to consider the foundation of it: namely, a desire to be clear in the sight of the shepherd and bishop of souls, from supporting a ministry of human ordination, exercising its functions for lucre, and tending to divert the attention of the people from the secret instruction of his all-sufficient Spirit. Divers have been the admonitions of this meeting to these unfaithful brethren, and clear the provision of our discipline against their confirmed neglect: but O, Friends of this description, how much more desirable is it to gain you by persuasion, and to perceive your judgments convinced by the light of truth, than to treat you as delinquents! Lay aside, therefore, your former prejudices. Suffer not the customs of men, the prospect of inconvenience, or the fear of appearing to differ from your intimates, so to influence your minds, as to make your deviations even desirable in your view. Be sure, also, that other inconsistencies with the self-denying character of a christian, do not keep you at a distance from that point of view, in which ye may clearly see your duty in this respect. How do you attend your religious meetings? What share have the honour and the gain of the world in your affections? Is the eye so single, that ye can be certain your judgment is right? These are important considerations: suffer them, then, to have due place in your minds.

We have this year received epistles from the Yearly Meetings of New-York, of Pennsylvania, of Maryland, and of Virginia, whereby we learn the continued engagement of our Friends to be of service to mankind in their generation.

In some of the states, we find Friends have been anxious to promote an increasing attention to the procuring an education for the descendants of the black people, suited to their station, and which may render them fit to become useful members of the community: and this, on the principle which, in most things undertaken by men, is a sure guide to doing right, and producing good effects; namely, the desire to do to others as we would they should do to us.

We wish the sympathy of Friends here, for the injured people whose sufferings are more nearly connected with this our native land, had been, by this time, more productive of benefit. On a case of distress so deep, and neglect so unfeeling, it is not always easy for the human mind to reflect, without bitter censure on the authors of their woes. But, Friends, a feeling hath been witnessed amongst us at this time, which directs the mind, in pity, towards the deplorable state of those men who promote, procure and execute, the tearing away of the Africans from their parent soil: and seeing we believe that a just and dreadful retribution awaits

the unrepenting and obdurate oppressor, at that awful tribunal where sophistry shall not prevail to exculpate, let us, amidst all our sympathy for the sufferers, give place in our minds, to a true concern for the traders in negroes....men equally interested with us in the rewards of futurity....and let us seek for, and cherish, that disposition of mind, which can pray for these enemies of humanity, and fervently breathe for their restoration to soundness of judgment, and purity of principle.

It hath been often observed, that the desire of acquiring wealth is an incitement to every evil; and having in this instance, a proof to what great lengths it will carry those who give it place in their hearts, let us guard against the beginnings of so great temptation. Circumscribed even as we are more than many, it is not unusual, in our pursuit of the things of this life, for our gain and our convenience to clash with our testimony. O, then may we be willing to pause, and give time for those passions to subside, which would hurry us to the accomplishment of the desired purpose, ere the still voice of wisdom be distinctly heard to guide us in the way in which we should go. And, beloved youth, in an especial manner, guard against the first sacrifices of duty to inclination. If ye curb inordinate desires in their infancy, your victory over future temptations will be the more easy; and, through faith in him that hath loved us, and hath overcome, ye will in time be more than conquerors: but if ye shrink from the conflict, or resign the victory to the tempter, ye will be despoiled of the armour designed to preserve you in future assaults; and, it may be, unable to resist, in your further progress through life, temptations which in the fresh morning of your day, ye would have held in abhorrence.

We have endeavoured in the two last years, to caution our brethren in profession, against suffering the commotions of the times to seduce them from the path of blameless simplicity, in which it becomes all true followers of Christ to walk. And though we desire not to repeat similar advice, we think it incumbent on us now to bid you beware of being induced, either inadvertently or for gain, in any manner to give countenance to the destroying practice of war. Many are the ways by which the unwary and the covetous may be caught. But, brethren, look beyond the surface. Behold the depth of misery into which war plunges mankind. Then, putting your trust in him who gives understanding to the simple, and provides for the sparrows, ye may avoid the pollution which is theirs, who join hands with this desolating evil.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by
LAWRENCE CANDLER,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXIX—1796.

Dear Friends,

We find our minds again engaged to send you the salutation of our love in Christ; desiring that, as we have been careful not to address you in formality, nor without a fresh belief that it is our duty, so ye may not consider this our epistle as a customary matter, nor read it in that disposition that is always seeking after some new thing; but may be willing to consider what parts of it are applicable to your own respective states; and let the expressions of our concern, for your present and everlasting welfare, receive and retain a sufficient place in your minds.

The accounts of the sufferings which have been sustained by our Friends in Great-Britain, and are now reported to this meeting, amount to eight thousand six hundred and fifty-eight pounds; about one thousand pounds of which consist of distrains for the late assessment for manning the navy: the rest, as usual, are chiefly for tithes, and demands of a similar nature. The amount of sufferings brought in from Ireland is two thousand three hundred and three pounds. And as we are informed that an opinion publicly prevails, that the purpose of these accounts is in order that the sufferings may be reimbursed, we desire Friends every where, as occasion may offer, to contradict this opinion, which hath no foundation in truth.

The Friends mentioned in our last epistle to be imprisoned on account of our testimony against tithes, still remain prisoners in the county gaol at York; objects themselves, as well as their afflicted families, of the sympathy of their fellow-professors; to whose lot it hath not fallen to experience a treatment so rigorous.

We have this year received epistles from our Friends of the Yearly Meetings of North and South Carolina and Georgia, of Virginia, of Pennsylvania, of New-York, and of New-England, evincing their continued concern to support our testimonies, and our christian discipline. The inhabitants of the continent, dwelling in fertile regions once possessed by different tribes of the Indian natives, are doubtless bound to regard them with benevolence: accordingly, we find our Friends engaged in an undertaking to furnish them with some of the comforts of civilized life. A fund is raising to supply the expense of instructing them in agriculture, in mechanic arts, and in some useful branches of learning.

On examining into the state of our society in these nations, we find cause to believe that, in many parts, the attention of

Friends is gradually fixing, more and more closely, on the excellence of the several testimonies which we are required to bear: and we are persuaded that were our members universally more loosened in their affections from the profits and the friendships of the world, the standard of truth would be more conspicuously and availingly displayed.

Let us consider, brethren, what is the cause of our dissent from the prevailing opinions and practices of the age. Is it not that we most surely believe that our faith is more consistent with the evangelical purity of the primitive times; and our manners less liable to promote an attachment to a world that passeth away? How then shall we set the candle, that hath been thus mercifully lighted in any of us, under the bed or the bushel; giving up any part of our testimony, be it ever so small, for the sake of ease, or of outward advantage?

The beloved apostle declared that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." A manifestation of this divine light, in infinite mercy, is given to every man, to lead him out of the misery of fallen nature, unto the eternal fountain of life and light. In every heart, and in every society of people, in which place is given to any kind of unrighteousness, an eclipse of the light necessarily follows as far as the compliance with evil extends; and if this state be continued in, spiritual death must ensue. Wherefore, brethren, in your conduct as individuals, and in the part which ye take in the exercise of the discipline established amongst us, be ye animated to resist every appearance of evil; remembering that, as our heavenly Father cannot unite with darkness, so neither must those unite with it, who desire to attain fellowship with him: in which fellowship our happiness consisteth, both in time and in eternity.

In these times of worldly commotion, the concern still remains with us, that our brethren may be preserved from joining with any thing, that immediately or remotely conduces to promote it. And, although of late we have, from year to year, testified our desire that Friends may take no part in that which genders strife; we still fear all are not sufficiently cautious, or sensible of the advantage of mixing as little as possible with the fluctuating politics of the times. For truly, were all concerned to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, the mind would be preserved on its proper centre; and to mix with the multitude, in their pursuit of the favourite object of any party, would be dreaded rather than desired.

Respecting the slave-trade, though we have no good tidings to proclaim, we feel unwilling to pass it over in silence. As a body we have been among the foremost to expose its turpitude; and,

although it doth not appear at present to be our duty to take any public step as the advocates of this degraded class of our fellow creatures, we still continue to view the commerce with unremitting abhorrence: and we much desire that no one, once touched with a sense of their complicated woe, may suffer its being thus dreadfully protracted, to efface the impression from his memory or sympathy from his heart.

This meeting hath been very large, and our minds have been much exercised in a travail for the cause of truth. O, Friends of every description, how would ye contribute, not only to your own peace as individuals, but to render our assemblies, under the sanction of the great Master, seasons of rejoicing, were ye all to be engaged in earnest, each one for himself, to do away the hurtful and hindering things, which ye must be sensible are yet to be found within our borders!

Finally, dear Friends; remember the apostolic declaration; "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." Strive therefore to become such, by obedience to his holy law. It hath been our uniform and constant testimony, that God hath vouchsafed his grace and good Spirit unto the children of men universally, as the mean of their sanctification. May ye therefore, in your several degrees of growth, evince and recommend your belief in it, by dwelling under its holy influence.

Again in gospel affection, we salute you, and bid you farewell.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

ROBERT FOWLER,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXX—1797.

Dear Friends,

We are sensible that there are among you, who travail with us in spirit for the advancement of the cause of truth; and we believe that this concern is increasing in divers places. Nevertheless, as at these seasons of general inspection, our minds continue to be impressed with a sense, that cautions are still needful in several particulars, we think it right still to endeavour to excite you to further degrees of dedication to the service, in which according to their measures, all ought to be engaged. If one be our Mas-

ter, even Christ, remember that in his family there is no place for the slothful. Accept, therefore, with this our salutation of brotherly love, our exhortation to be willing individually to inquire, "what lack I yet?"

We have this year received epistles from all the Yearly Meetings of Friends in America; and also some verbal accounts given by brethren who have been travelling, in the service of the gospel, on the continent of Europe; in some parts of which, the same divine hand which led our predecessors out of forms, to the substance of christianity, appears to be collecting a people, to bear witness to the saving efficacy of the light of Christ revealed in the heart.

The amount of sufferings reported to have been sustained by our Friends of this island, is eight thousand and twenty-two pounds; that in Ireland, one thousand three hundred and forty-seven pounds. These are principally for tithes, priests' demands and those called church-rates; and increased again this year by distrains on account of the rate for raising men for the army and navy, and the militia. On this last account also, one Friend hath been not long since committed for three months to the county gaol at York; and another last summer was detained a like term in that at Worcester. Of the prisoners at York, on account of our testimony against an hireling ministry, one has been released by death: the rest still remain prisoners.

On considering the state of our society, several defects occur: for in a people professing as we do, indeed in all who assume the christian name, it is a defect not to avoid every thing which tends to evil, and to bring reproach on their profession. Of this kind is the want of punctuality in the fulfilling of engagements, of which we understand there are some instances: but if all were sufficiently sensible of the injustice of the practice, of the disgrace with which it is attended, and what an occasion of stumbling it may be to those who are inquiring after the way of truth, it would surely preserve them from inadvertently forming engagements, which they were not clear that they were able to fulfil. The same care of preserving our profession from reproach, might also if kept in the remembrance, prevent another evil of which we have at this time some account; namely, the unnecessary frequenting of public-houses. We desire that all under our name may be cautious of remaining in them, after the purpose of business, or of refreshment, is accomplished: but to make them a resort for any other purpose, may it never need to be named among a people who profess the practice of christian sobriety!

We are not disposed to enter into all the particulars of deviation, in which those, who will not submit to be bound by the testimony

of truth in their hearts, may be found ; but we think we can trace several of them to that common, but destructive cause, the love of worldly things. In some it discovers itself in a desire to be rich and great ; whilst in others the worldly spirit is as clearly discerned, though the attention seems to be occupied in smaller concerns : and though we are clear that very extensive ones are often in themselves great evils, yet the trafficker in hundreds, unless the eye be kept single, may be as much buried in the earth as the trafficker in thousands. But were each honestly to ask himself the question, " Have I first sought the kingdom of heaven and " its righteousness ? " how might the answer tend to cover the face with confusion ! Did our Lord utter any one precept with a clear address to the reason, and greater promise of support, than that of which such a question is the substance ? So that to seek first the world, is to give up at once our obedience to his command with our trust in his promise. " All these things shall be " added unto you." " Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye " have need of all these things."*

We are not about to condemn industry, which we believe to be not only praise-worthy, but indispensable. It is the desire of great things, and the engrossment of the time and attention, from which we desire that all our dear Friends may be redeemed. We doubtless owe duties to ourselves, and to our families ; but we owe them also to society ; and do we not owe even our ourselves to our all-wise, all-protecting, and provident Creator ? Should we therefore suffer the things of this world to prevent our attending at the times appointed for his worship ; whether on the day generally set apart for that purpose, or on other stated days of the week ; and ought we to be content when assembled, to permit our thoughts to wander into the concerns of the present life ?

The situation of the offspring, and of the servants, of those who neglect the due attendance of our religious meetings, is greatly to be lamented ; as is, that even of some who though frequently seen at them, do not by their conduct seem to believe that it is required of them to allow their dependents also to attend ; but are leaving these still to pursue the world for them at home. For if any have in a greater or less degree, made gold their hope, or have " said to the fine gold, thou art my confidence," † it will be found that, in proportion, they will be slack in bringing their families to our accustomed opportunities for public worship.

We feel not inclined, though war yet continues to desolate the earth, to repeat our advices on that head, or to resume the subject further than to remark how thankful we ought to be, in that we

* MAT. vi. 32, 33.

† JOB. xxxi. 24.

are still permitted to meet together, as we have done at this time, in brotherly fellowship and mutual condescension; whilst the world around us is tossed with the tempest of discord. O Friends, may we consider it as an incitement to suffer every thing, which tends to contention, to be eradicated from our hearts; and, under the influence of the heavenly husbandman, to cultivate with unwearied assiduity and patience, all those dispositions which make for peace; things whereby we may edify one another; yea, things by which we may evince to our fellow men at large, that we are really redeemed from the spirit of contests, and truly the disciples of a merciful Redeemer; whose holy, pure, and undefiled religion is a system of universal love.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOSEPH GIBBINS,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXI—1798.

Dear Friends,

Among other advantages which we find in thus assembling ourselves before the Lord, it is none of the least, that our love for the members of his mystical body, the church, receives from time to time a renewal of holy fervour; with ardent desire that she may increase in qualification to be presented to him a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. May we, Friends, as a part thereof, through the grace which is given to us, be willing to cleanse ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, and to become holy in all manner of conversation.

We have no new doctrines to communicate. Happy, yea, blessed should we be, could every man find a testimony in his conscience, that he acted consistently with those he hath already received: but still it remains our concern to stir up the pure mind in each other, and to press the observance of those things which appear to be neglected. And how shall we find any subject of greater moment, whereon to renew the often repeated call to vigilance, than that leading duty of public worship, and of seeking the recruits of strength, and of confidence to persevere in the way of peace, which the mind may experience in the humble performance of this solemn obligation? None of the negligent can say he has no need of the support; yet too many seem, by their conduct, to indicate that they think so. But, Friends, review the subject; let not an evil habit prevail; but suffer yourselves to be

weaned from it. Make the essay of a better practice, and you will find to your comfort that difficulties will often sink as you approach.

Every step which we can gain in the way of obedience to duty, is not only of advantage to ourselves, but it gives additional strength and animation to be beneficial to others. By this mean alone can the parent, the guardian, or the master, hope to discharge his important and awful trust to the lambs committed to his care, in the wilderness of this world. And what need there is of seeking all means of qualification to be helpful to them, the dangers of that wilderness, and the failure of many who are entrusted with the charge, too obviously declare. We fear that in many instances, an early and frequent perusal of the scriptures of truth, and opportunities of quiet retirement in families, before the Lord, are neglected; whilst amusements not suited to the condition of a candidate for immortality, and writings inimical to the simplicity of the gospel, are indulged or connived at. We fear also, that some of our youth are training in habits of expence in attire, furniture and attendance; which, growing into custom, are not only inconsistent with the simplicity of the gospel, but a constant call for much of that property, which would be better employed in feeding the hungry; and of that time, which might be occupied in visiting and cheering the habitations of human misery. 'The trimmings of the vain world,' said our worthy elder William Penn, 'would clothe the naked one.' It is not however with such only that we plead, on behalf of the indigent. We wish those who are generally consistent in appearance and manners with our self-denying profession, to be clear that a due proportion of their time and substance is spent in the relief of distress. This is a day when thousands of our fellow-creatures are wanting the necessaries of the body; and thousands imbibing with avidity principles injurious to the mind. Happy will it be, on a parting retrospect, to believe that we have neither contributed, by misapplication of our entrusted property, to the one; nor omitted to do all in our power to prevent the baneful spread of the other. Christ is all; in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and the observance of his law, written on the heart, would restore perfect harmony to the universe.

We have at this meeting received as usual, accounts of the sufferings of our members. The whole amount in Great-Britain, is upwards of ten thousand three hundred pounds, chiefly for tithes and those called church-rates; but including about two thousand pounds for military purposes. The amount of those reported from Ireland is seven hundred and eighty-five pounds. The Friend imprisoned last year at York, on account of the mi-

litia, was released at the expiration of his term; and the remaining prisoners on account of tithes, by a special clause for that purpose in an act of parliament, by virtue of which distrains were made on their effects. Three other Friends were near the end of last year, committed to Huntingdon gaol, by Exchequer process, on account of tithes, and afterwards for a short time to the Fleet prison; but were released on the issuing of a writ of sequestration.

We have received epistles from the Yearly Meetings of Virginia, of Maryland, of Pennsylvania, of New-York, and of New-England. Among other concerns of Friends on the continent, that for the violated rights of our fellow-men of the African race still continues. Our Meeting for Sufferings here, also, lately presented, in the name of the society, a third petition to the house of commons, on the subject of the British traffic in the persons of men. Its failure of success is well known; but we see no reason to be discouraged from again becoming public advocates of the Africans, when a sense of duty shall open the way.

We desire afresh to press upon all our members, the necessity of a peaceful and innocent demeanour amongst men; and especially let all be careful not to seek or accept profit by any concern in the preparations so extensively making for war: for how reproachfully inconsistent would it be to refuse an active compliance with warlike measures; and, at the same time, not to hesitate to enrich ourselves by the commerce and other circumstances dependent on war.

Finally, dear Friends; let us bear in constant remembrance that important principle of our profession, a testimony to the pure and free ministry of the gospel of Christ; whose sole prerogative it is, to send and qualify such as it pleases him, without respect to worldly rank, or human acquirements; and all his truly devoted servants, whatever may be their gifts and stations in the church, are brethren; and hold them under him the only head, and the universal and all-sufficient teacher.

We salute you in gospel love, and remain your affectionate Friends and brethren.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOSEPH BIRKBECK,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year,

EPISTLE CXXII—1799.

Dear Friends,

After some serious investigation into the present state of our religious society, wherein we humbly trust, that the gracious head of the church hath not been wanting to cement our minds in the bond of his love, and from time to time to refresh us together, we again salute you; and inform you, that at this our large annual assembly, a concern has been felt, extending to every branch of the family. We desire it may be bound up in the same precious cementing union; that so, not any thing which has a tendency to scatter, may be suffered to prevail. To this end, may it be the chief care of all, to dwell near the power, by the assistance of which unsanctified self is reduced and denied: then will the wisdom which is from above be exalted, and brought into dominion.

The accounts of sufferings brought up this year from the various parts of this nation, amount to seven thousand four hundred and seventy eight pounds; and those from Ireland, to seven hundred and seventy one pounds; chiefly for tithes, priests' demands, and those called church-rates; and also for various demands on account of the militia, and other warlike measures, with which, from a conviction that we ought not to be active in promoting the destruction of the precious, yea invaluable, lives of mankind, we scruple to comply.

We have this year received epistles from four, only, of the Yearly Meetings on the American continent; namely, the Carolinas, &c. Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The last, having met at the usual time of its sitting, during the prevalence of a contagious and highly mortal fever, adjourned to the Twelfth month last. By this disease thousands of the inhabitants of Philadelphia were quickly removed out of time. Let us in reverence of soul, avoid too nice an inquiry into the moral causes of such dreadful calamities; but seek, with unremitting solicitude, an entrance, through the strait gate, into that narrow, but not untrodden path, which alike leads to blessedness through every dispensation of the Lord's unerring providence.

Friends, we in this land, do not live unsurrounded by manifold dangers; nor in an age in which we can dispense with any part of the whole armour of light. The increase of mortality in a country brings the body into jeopardy; but it often arouses the careless, and drives the awakened mind into closer communion with God. But it is the peculiar property of many of the contagious vices and vanities, with which these countries abound, that

they lull to security the incautious, even though once aroused, and point their infection at the well-being of the soul.

By what means, then, shall we expect preseryation? Our belief, dear Friends, is, that it will depend on a frequent recurrence to our first principle: even to the saving power of Christ Jesus: our Lord, revealed in the heart. "This," said our Redeemer when personally on earth, "is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." But this, Friends, is no trivial nor momentary acquirement. Many of you know that it must be waited for in singleness of heart, and that the important pursuit of this heavenly knowledge should regulate the tenour of our lives. Where then, judge ye, would any find leisure for those amusements, in which some in profession with us, are reported to waste much of their time? This meeting has repeatedly testified against vainsports, and places of diversion, as so many allurements tending to draw the mind from its watch, and to lay it open to further temptation. The best recreation of a christian is the relief of distress; and his chief delight, to promote the knowledge, and to exalt the glory, of his heavenly Master: and this, is most effectually done, under his holy influence, by a life of faith, purity, and general benevolence. False principles too, as well as wrong practices, may have their advocates for a time; but the unspotted lives of the faithful remain to be their best refutation. Let none then start aside at the magnitude of the object, or be too much dismayed because of the little progress they seem to themselves to make in the way of holiness; but, trusting in the Lord, who "giveth power to the faint," let us all press after ability to comply with the apostolic advice, "Be ye holy, in all manner of conversation."

We have received accounts this year, as well as in preceding years, that divers persons have joined our society by convincement. For you of this description, we feel a tender care, and that, after admittance into membership, you may not measure yourselves by the standard of others; nor take up a rest short of the true rest. Seek rather an increase in the heavenly principle which comes by Jesus Christ, the true and holy pattern for his flock. Thus only, will your union with us contribute to your advantage; and thus only, will the increase of numbers produce an increase of the joy.

Now, turning our attention to the church in its more collected capacity, of Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, we perceive that weakness and langour continue to pervade the deliberations of some of them, on the important concerns of the society; and often prevent the due and timely support of that christian discipline, which we have long experienced to be, under providence, as a wall of preservation. Nevertheless, we believe we can also discern

that there is a gradual increase of care in many places; and that the quickened sensibility, with which the minds of numbers of our brethren are graciously indued, has rendered many things burthensome, which in times of greater negligence, scarcely have been noticed: and to this we attribute many of the complaints now contained in the answer to the queries: Our desire therefore is, that such upright minds may be encouraged to persevere. That which shows the disease must be looked to for the remedy. Hold on, then, your way, beloved Friends; and may the Lord give you all the discernment, skill, forbearance and fortitude, which are requisite for the impartial and seasonable discharge of the trust which he commits to you.

Finally, Friends, collectedly and individually, farewell! May all our meetings be held, with weight, as in the immediate presence of the heavenly president: May the aged among us be examples of every christian virtue; and evince, by the calmness of their evening, that their day has been blest. May the middle aged not faint in their allotted stations; but, together with their elder and younger brethren, firmly support, yea exalt, the several testimonies which we are called to maintain. And, O! may the beloved youth, the tender objects of our care, and of our hope, bend early and chearfully under the forming power of truth: that thus, each standing in his allotment, the harmony of the building may be preserved, and we may truly grow up into an holy temple for the Lord.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

GEORGE STACEY, *Clerk.*

EPISTLE CXXIII—1800.

Dear Friends,

A religious concern still attends our minds, that ye, our dear absent brethren, may partake of the benefit and blessing of our thus assembling together; not only by means of such regulations as have been found expedient, but that we may convey to you, through this our affectionate salutation, the desire which the collected body feels for you as for itself; that we may all be what we profess: that we may all daily look to our foundations, and be fervent in our prayers for an establishment upon that rock, against which every storm will beat in vain. In the renewings; therefore, of that love, which knows no abatement from length

of time ; but through all ages remains the same, in the hearts of believers ; in the love of the gospel of Christ Jesus, our Redeemer, we tenderly salute you.

The accounts of sufferings brought in this year, chiefly for tithes, priests' demands, and those called church-rates, also for military purposes, amount in Great-Britain to seven thousand five hundred and ninety-one pounds, and in Ireland to six hundred and three pounds.

Epistles have been received this year from all the Yearly Meetings on the American continent ; and accounts, from our several Quarterly Meetings, and from Ireland. Having, in these last mentioned communications a view of the present state of the society in these nations, we find cause to continue " to stir up your pure mind by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."*

We beseech you, brethren, be watchful. Keep in the holy inclosure of the preserving fear of God ; and call to mind the perfect security of Israel, encamped of old under his never-failing protection ; when the intended curses of an enemy were converted into blessings. He with whom we have to do, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Why then are we not kept in his fear, and made perfect in his love ? Is it not because the visible things of this fading state, are in various ways and proportions, drawing away our attention ? But, Friends, enter from time to time into the closet : shut to the door. Pray to your Father who seeth in secret, for daily supplies of strength, to suppress that immoderate love of earthly things which prevents you from giving to him his due pre-eminence.

They who are obedient to this universal injunction of our Saviour, " Watch," are prepared for the due fulfilling of every duty ; and eminently so, for that most essential one of worship. How many feel themselves languid when assembled for this solemn purpose, for want of a previous preparation of heart ! The mind crowded with thoughts on outward things, in approaching the place for public worship, and resuming them with avidity on its return, is not likely to fill up the interval to profit ; and to such, their meeting together may prove a form as empty, as any of those out of which, we believe, truth called our forefathers, and still calls us. If we truly succeed them, as witnesses for the truth, we must look beyond forms to that which is the life of all true religious performances : so we may become fitted in our several

stations, for the Lord's service, the promotion of the cause of righteousness on earth.

Dear Friends, we believe there are many of you, and especially of the youth, who, in a good degree, have given up, and are giving up your hearts to serve the Lord. May you submit with patience to all the repeated baptisms necessary for your refinement. The gospel hath its tribulations; but they are not like the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. They are intended to disturb the polluted rest in mere worldly enjoyments; they unite you to the living members of Christ's body, in whom the same things have been accomplished; and, if they be accepted as tokens of his love, and abode under the allotted time without repining, they will completely unite you to him, the holy head.

Wherefore, ye dearly beloved youth, our treasure, in whom we sometimes dare to delight, and to hope that you will one day succeed to the places of those faithful labourers, who have passed, and are passing from works to rewards; we entreat you, dear children, with tender solicitude we press it upon you, flee from every thing which tends to despoil you of your innocence; and to render your minds less receptive of that holy influence, which your enlightened judgment demonstrates to be truth.

And ye parents, be ye solicitous to discharge your important and awful duty, with scrupulous attention. It is often too late to warn the youthful mind of danger, when your own negligence or indulgence hath suffered your offspring to deviate from that path of simplicity, in which you have thought yourselves bound to walk, and in which you have found peace. If you fail to suppress the early beginnings of undue liberty, how can you expect a blessing on your endeavours, when further deviations at length arouse your attention; and how, having failed to rule your own houses well, can you expect duly to "take care of the church of God;"* by performing that too much neglected duty of private admonition therein? There were of old those who brought children to Christ, in the days of his flesh; and now the religious parent can breathe no warmer aspiration for them, than when he spiritually commends his tender offspring to the protection of his Lord. But see, Friends, that you encourage no propensities in them which prevent a union with him. Restrain them, we beseech you, from associating with those whose influence and example lead away from his law; and be especially careful that you introduce not among them, publications, which are either wholly, or in part, repugnant to the faith, as it is in Jesus. Let it be your own daily care to endeavour after closer communion with him, and to walk in meek submission to his commands: so

* 1 TIM. iii. 5.

may you gain, over the minds of the youth providentially placed under your care, that ascendancy which arises from the united effects of sound judgment, truest love, and a good example.

Finally, Friends of every age, of every rank, we commend you to the protection of him who died for us, and "who ever liveth to make intercession for us, who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."*

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

WILLIAM ALEXANDER.

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXIV—1801.

Dear Friends,

Various have been the exercises in which our minds have been engaged in this our annual solemnity; yet the spiritual welfare of our absent Friends, as our own, having been the great object to which they tend, we are disposed afresh thus to greet you in Christ Jesus our Lord: desiring that in him, and by him, ye may be made perfect, established, strengthened, settled. But let us remember that this holy establishment is not to be attained but through suffering. The cross still remains the way to the crown. Nevertheless, as a patient endurance of suffering works for us the far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory, let us accept it as the discipline of Christ, designed to make us proficient in his school, partakers of his baptism, and finally, inheritors of his promise.

The maxims and policy of this fleeting world are still, as they ever have been, opposed to these sacred truths. The spirit of the world, therefore, hath its allurements for drawing the incautious of every class from under this holy discipline. It captivates some with its profits, others with its pleasures, and others with its prospects of greater ease, than the way of truth will admit. The rich and the poor, the wise and the simple, are all within the reach of its baits: and if palpable temptations to indulgence are withstood, it can insinuate itself under the appearance of virtue, and zeal for the honour of God. Wherefore, dear Friends, we exhort you, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day; and, having done all, to stand."† How emphatic the expression, "*Having done all, to stand.*" Be willing to be invested, by the captain of our salvation, with every article of his heavenly armoury; and, as saith

* HEB. vii. 25.

† EPH. vi. 13.

the apostle, above all, "Take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Thus, Friends, accept our warm and cordial salutation, in scripture phrase; but let us all, having surveyed the standard of righteousness, be willing to be measured by it; to examine our own states, and to see whether, we are doing all in our power to edify our brethren. It hath pleased our wise creator to plant us in society. To know, therefore, whether we are acting our proper part in it before him, or not, is a subject worthy of our serious consideration.

And ye, dear Friends, whose hearts are indeed bound to the holy testimony, be vigilant, we beseech you. When ye see the approach of an enemy, be timely in warning of the danger. There is probably no one, however obscure his station, whose heart the Lord hath touched, and who hath bended under the secret convictions, but may be in his hand, an instrument of good to others. Faint not, therefore, nor be weary, even though you should seem to labour without fruit; but remember that no service in his vineyard, and by his direction, goes without its reward: and that it is he alone that can give the increase.

To you also who occupy the more conspicuous stations in our society, we are concerned to extend the word of exhortation. Be ye ensamples to the flock. Such, however, ye can never be, but by taking heed to your own steps, by the light wherewith Christ, the chief shepherd, hath enlightened you. But if you suffer the light that is in you to become darkness, "how great is that darkness!" If this should unhappily be the case with any, such may resemble those of whom it was said of old, that they entered not in themselves, nor suffered those that were entering to go in. But, beloved Friends, let us add, in words similiar to those of the apostle, we are persuaded better things of numbers among you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

And, dear young people, our anxious and constant care, how shall we express the desire that we feel, that no evil may prevail against you! and, truly, what thing shall ever "harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"* But ye yourselves must cooperate with the grace, which is from time to time offered for your acceptance. You must watch, and you must pray, to be preserved from evil; and if you are in earnest in this exercise, you certainly will be careful to avoid the means of temptation. They are various: but your guide will not fail you in discovering them. See ye therefore to it, and may the Lord endow you richly with his blessing.

The sufferings of Friends brought in this year are chiefly for

* 1 PET. iii. 13.

tithes, priests' demands, and those called church-rates, also for divers demands of a military nature. Their amount is upwards of nine thousand and forty pounds, from Great-Britain and Ireland.

Epistles have been received from all the Yearly Meetings on the American continent. Our Friends in Pennsylvania have some time had it in contemplation to establish a boarding school, under the direction of their Yearly Meeting. Their undertaking appears prosperous. The school is established and opened, and upwards of two hundred children have been admitted. We also learn that the government of the United States, has made such additions to the law heretofore passed for the abolition of the slave trade, as afford a rational prospect that the iniquitous traffic will be done away in those states.

From an inspection into the state of the society, as laid open in the answers to the queries brought to this meeting, we think we can discover on the whole, reason for encouragement; but the concern truly to labour for the removal of hurtful things, appears to be less in some places than in others, and in most quarters too little. Wherefore, dear Friends, let us renew our exhortation, be in earnest. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."*

"Iron," saith the wise man, "sharpeneth iron: so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Thus, at these our Yearly Meetings, we are encouraged by the presence of each other to persevere in the way which we believe to be cast up for us. But we are not unmindful of the different situation of many of you, dear Friends, whose lots are cast in solitary places, and who necessarily assemble for worship in small companies. But seeing, "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him,"† we beseech you to be encouraged in the punctual attendance of your meetings. This, indeed, we believe, is incumbent on all who desire to manifest themselves to be his humble dependants, and is especially necessary at a time when, under various and specious pretences, many are neglecting the due performance of this leading duty. We therefore are disposed with respect to this subject, and some others to which we have adverted in this our epistle, to sum up our concern with the language of the apostle, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised; and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;

* COL. iii. 23.

† ROM. x. 12.

“but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see
“the day approaching.”* Friends, farewell in the Lord.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

WILLIAM RAWES, jun.

Clerk to the Meeting this Year:

EPISTLE CXXV—1802.

Dear Friends,

We are sensible that unless the Lord bless the labours of the church, its attempts to edify and to console you must be in vain: but on examining into the present state of our religious society, we apprehend we have felt a warmth which warrants the continued salutation of our love; and we have had our minds directed to divers subjects, respecting which we deem that counsel is expedient. Accept therefore, Friends, our salutation: it is that of brethren. Receive, we beseech you, the counsel which we may be enabled to impart: its object is your increase in Christ, your establishment in righteousness, your present well-being, your eternal salvation.

This meeting has not been quite so large as some in former years; nor have the cases which have claimed our attention been so numerous; but the strength arising from the labour of many minds united in the same cause, has been in a good degree experienced.

The amount of sufferings brought in this year is upwards of nine thousand five hundred pounds; chiefly for tithes, priests' demands, and those called church-rates, and some demands of a military nature. One Friend also was imprisoned for a short time on account of tithes.

We have received an epistle from Ireland, and epistles from all the Yearly Meetings of Friends in North America; by which we learn, that our brethren in those countries not only are exercised in various concerns peculiar to their own situations, but, in common with us, remain engaged to inquire into the spiritual welfare of the members, to breathe for the removal of every thing that tends to defile, and to rejoice at the signs, which they observe, of dedication to the Lord's cause.

Since our last Yearly Meeting, two signal benefits have been permitted to our native land: the stop lately put to the effusion

* HEB. x. 23 to 25.

of human blood; and the plentiful increase of sustenance, afforded by means of the last year's harvest, at a time when famine seemed approaching, and when want was severely felt by the poorer classes of the community at large. We doubt not that there yet remain many who will long feel the consequences of such deep distress; and we believe that we should acceptably show our gratitude to the common parent and bountiful Father of mankind, if we yet sought out and assisted such as the calamities of preceding seasons have bereaved of their necessary comforts: more especially among the aged and the infirm. On an occasion, too, of such general satisfaction, as the return of peace to this nation, it peculiarly behoves us, as we are known to have a testimony against those modes of rejoicing, even for peace itself, which are generally attended with profusion and tumult, to evince that we really rejoice at the prosperity of our country, by doing good according to our ability to all.

But, dear Friends; in times of outward prosperity there are snares to be avoided, as well as duties to be fulfilled. One of those snares seems to us to be a too eager, and therefore unlawful pursuit of lawful things. Such a pursuit prevents the mind from rising in living aspirations to God, the giver of every good and perfect gift; indisposes it for duly assembling with his devoted servants to wait upon him, and worship him; and causes "the volume of the book" of sacred scripture....that record of truth which was written aforetime for our instruction.... to be but seldom perused. Such a pursuit also, if general, spreads devastation over religious society. But, Friends, we entreat you, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and "all these things,"* said our blessed Redeemer, speaking of necessary things, "shall be added unto you." Then would your assemblies together be seasons of heavenly consolation; your hearts would be enlarged in that gospel love, that knows no bounds to its desire of human happiness; you would cover that others might partake with you of the enriching joy; and ye would be careful that not any trifling impediment prevented the due attendance of your own families. "Come," would ye say by your example if not in words, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."† "Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."‡

Now, dear Friends, who stand in the tender relation, and in the awful and important station of parents, such of you more particularly as have bought the truth, let us again remind you of

* MAT. vi. 33.

† MIC. iv. 2.

‡ JER. l. 5.

the danger of indulging your inexperienced offspring in worldly liberties, from which the truth restrains you. Let not any false and specious reasoning prevail on you to suppose, that it will be sufficiently soon for their wills to be subjected, when they shall have attained maturity of judgment. Then, alas! the practice of self-gratification may be so confirmed, that the way of self-denial may seem to them much narrower than it really is; and you will have contributed to increase the difficulties of those, whom it was your indispensable duty to protect, to guard from all danger, and to train up in the way they should go. It is still a precept sanctioned by reason and by revelation, "Train up a child in the way he should go;"* and this was imputed to Abraham, as a thing well-pleasing to the Almighty. "For I know him," said the Lord, "that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord."†

And, beloved young Friends; submit, we beseech you, with readiness to the restraints of your religious parents. As you accustom yourselves to bend in due subjection to the power of truth in your own hearts, such restraint will become less irksome, as also it will be less necessary. Many of you, we are persuaded, are no strangers to the voice of wisdom speaking in secret, and saying, when you are disposed to turn to the right, or to the left hand, "This is the way, walk ye in it."‡ Many inconveniences, evils, and occasions for sorrow of heart, may be avoided, by hearing and consulting the holy witness in yourselves. It will sometimes gently arrest you in the prosecution of your purpose, when you may not distinctly see the cause. But it is wiser than we, proceeding from that pure intelligence to which all things and all events are known. O! then, mind its secret checks: and we are at this time particularly engagéd to recommend you to consult the witness, ere you venture upon the perusal of the specious publications with which this age abounds. In this way, dear children, keep your hearts "with all diligence;" lest ye enter into temptation.

And for you, whatever be your age or station, who have the burthen of the cause resting as on your shoulders, in this exercising day, our desires are strong, that you may be preserved in humility and patience, and steadily persevere in the path of duty. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."§ Thus, dear Friends, as you persevere, having your trust and your dependence on the

* PROV. xxii. 6. † GEN. xviii. 19. ‡ ISAIAH xxx. 21. § PHIL. i. 29.

invincible, though sometimes invisible, arm of Almighty power, the Lord will become your shield, and your exceeding great reward.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOSEPH GIBBINS,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXVI—1803.

Dear Friends,

It hath seemed good to this meeting to send you a fresh memorial of its love and of its continuing travail, that you may be more and more purified from every defilement of flesh and spirit: that thus you may shew forth in your lives the efficacy of the grace of our blessed Redeemer; and at the solemn final close, and in the day of righteous decision, be of the number whom he will own in the presence of his Almighty Father. Ah! Friends, is not this the mark at which all of us ought to aim? Is not this the prize without which all other acquisitions are “less than nothing, and vanity?” Seek it therefore with a solicitude proportioned to its infinite importance; suffer not the things of time to have an undue share of your affections; and look with faith and reliance on the captain of our salvation. Out of him we can do nothing: in him is life, and that life is the light of men.

Epistles have been received from New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas; also an epistle from Ireland. The unity of religious concern, discoverable in these testimonials of the remembrance of our distant brethren, is truly acceptable.

The amount of sufferings brought in this year is about eight thousand nine hundred pounds: * they are chiefly, as heretofore, for tithes, and other ecclesiastical demands; with a portion for the militia. One Friend has been imprisoned on this latter account.

Though we have not for some years thought it necessary always to announce the additions to our society by conviction, it may be proper now to remark, that it has not been because the number of such as are from time to time led so to join us, has been less. This year also we have an account of several: and we

* Friends are desired, if occasion should occur, to contradict an opinion which sometimes prevails among the public—that the society repay the sufferers. No such practice has ever existed.

believe the nearer we ourselves approach to the standard of truth, the more will our conduct invite others to repair to it.

On examining the present state of our religious society, we have found several things to lament, because we believe them to be the consequence of a neglect of the holy light of which we have been speaking ; but no one hath engaged more of our attention, or occasioned a deeper exercise of mind, than to observe that some of our members are more or less deficient in duly attending the opportunities for public worship. And though we have often, and even lately, expressed our concern on this account ; yet the continued need of admonition, the succession of persons to whom our advice may reach, and the warmth we feel in contemplating the subject.....all induce us to open it somewhat further for your serious consideration.

That the assembling of ourselves for the purpose of expressing our sense of dependence on our great Creator is a duty, most if not all of us acknowledge, by stated or occasional attendance at some of the times appointed for worship. But too many content themselves with an attendance once in the week, on the day when business is suspended ; and even of that day, the greater part is devoted to what is called relaxation. Thus little as it is which is meant for sacrifice, that little has cost them nothing. And how many....how many even of those who are far removed above indigence....seldom, if ever, leave off their outward pursuits, to join with their brethren, on other days of the week ! The want of a due and diligent attendance at the usual times, is productive of many evils. It often deprives the mind of opportunities of instruction and consolation ; and thus leaves it more liable to be drawn aside from the right way, by the spirit of the world ; it leads naturally to the neglect of other religious duties ; and it tends to occasion indifference in those to whom the influence reaches, by its baneful example. But the habitual neglect of religious meetings, in any of our members, as it is thus the cause of many evils, hath also itself a cause. This, dear Friends, we should search out, if we wish to have the remedy applied. And to what cause can we ascribe it, but to a want of hunger and thirst for that spiritual refreshment, which is yet, blessed be the Lord, to be known in the meetings of his humble and dependent servants ? Now if we feel not this hunger and thirst, is there not reason for us to be alarmed : and may we not justly fear, that we are spiritually sick ? And truly, notwithstanding the excuses of such as yet acknowledge public worship to be essential, and the specious semblances of reasoning of such as attempt to set aside a constant obligation to it, experience has taught us, that a neglect of meetings both indicates and produces indisposition of mind ; and tends to lay

waste religious society. Wherefore, we once more beseech the remiss of the present day, to lay these things to heart, and strive for amendment; and we again press it upon such as are themselves diligent, that they do not neglect any gentle intimation of duty, to admonish a brother or a sister for whose remissness they may feel concern.

But although we are thus particular on a subject, which we believe concerns not us alone, but every professor of the christian name; we have not been unmindful of several testimonies which we believe to be, as yet, more particularly our own: to bear for the honour of the great head of the church, and against the spirit which leads into conformity with the world. Such is our testimony for the free teachings of the light of Christ revealed in the soul, and through such instruments as he may immediately prepare, call and qualify; in contradistinction to a ministry formed by man, and undertaken for temporal rewards. This testimony remains as incumbent upon us as ever, and altho' our accounts indicates it rather to gain ground than to decline, yet a concern hath been witnessed at this time that it may still further prevail, and be borne in a disposition which may shew to observers, that our motive is singly to promote the cause of Christ.

The deviations from our ancient simplicity of manners, of speech, and of attire, however some may affect to term them small things, are notwithstanding causes of great grief to the faithful among us: because we are persuaded that they demonstrate a mind averse from the self-denial which the gospel enjoins, and lead to liberties of a hurtful tendency. In our last epistle, we cautioned such as have the care of youth, against an indulgence in these respects that wounds their own minds, and lamentably injures the tender objects of their care. We renew the caution, and we press it upon Friends who themselves are clear, to be early and earnest in advising parents against the beginnings of connivance at the vain propensities of their children. But, Friends, what shall we say to such as lead them, almost in infancy, into fashions which they themselves, in their own practice, appear to disapprove?

Now for you, tender youth, arises, before we conclude, the salutation of love, and the word of encouragement. We have often addressed you also with counsel and caution, because we have often felt you, as we now feel, very near to us in gospel affection; and we pray that nothing may unfit you to be presented and united to Christ. Even now, in early life, if you seek an acquaintance with him, as outwardly revealed in the scriptures of truth, and inwardly in your hearts; and if you become his friends by obedience to his voice; even now you will contribute to the advancements of his cause of righteousness; and as you follow on, under the

guidance of his meek and lowly spirit, you will be enabled more conspicuously to espouse his cause, when the faithful labourers of the present day shall have entered into rest.

May young and old, and all the intermediate classes of our society be aroused to a due sense of the one important purpose of life. Is it not to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling? And why with fear, but from the natural infirmity of the creature, and the temptations which surround? But, Friends, hold on your way. Help is laid on one that is mighty. He who died for us will not forsake those that trust in him.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

ROBERT BARNARD,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXXII.—1804.

Dear Friends,

It is not a light matter to undertake to give counsel to the society; nor do we address you merely because it is a practice sanctioned by usage; but our minds have been much engaged in desires for the spiritual welfare of the family; and in considering the various means by which that welfare may be promoted, or obstructed. And, dear Friends, let us also remind you, that it is not a light matter to receive counsel. O that we could fix upon your minds, that we could livingly implant in your souls, the sense, we trust we are at this time endued with, that it is the Master's will that his servants should advance in righteousness! Do not therefore read or hear with indifference these our repeated salutations of love; but treasure them in your hearts; lay them up as tokens of that charity which endureth. Thus will our absent brethren co-operate with the assembled church, in carrying on the work of reformation, in promoting the cause of Christ.

We have received at this meeting, epistles from all the Yearly Meetings on the American continent, except one, and the usual accounts from the Quarterly and other meetings in these nations; whereby we are informed of the present state of our society. In every quarter there is some defect in duly supporting the testimonies of truth, but we have no cause to believe, that the religious care to administer help is on the decline; though often feebly exerted: and amidst all the sorrow which we feel that it is so, it is comfort to observe that many seem convinced of our principles:

of whom a considerable number have lately joined the society. Our brethren in Pennsylvania and Maryland appear to have prospered much in their benevolent attempts to introduce amongst the Indians, the comforts and benefits of civilized life, and of religious instruction.

The amount of sufferings brought in this year from Great-Britain and Ireland, is twelve thousand six hundred and thirty pounds, of which about nine thousand three hundred and seventy pounds are for tithes, priests' demands, and those called church-rates; and three thousand two hundred and sixty pounds, for demands of a military nature. Several Friends have suffered each three months imprisonment on the latter account.

Since we last met together in this city, the dreadful alarm of war has increased; and, seeing we believe no people have a deeper sense of the calamity which war entails on mankind, and the reproach it is upon the christian name, we may, without the imputation of viewing it singly as it concerns ourselves, inform you of our present feelings on the subject. Our general scruple to bear arms is well known; and truly we are satisfied that our testimony in this respect is a testimony for Messiah, of whose reign it is the glory, that "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together."* Most, if not all, people admit the transcendent excellency of peace. All who adopt the petition, "Thy kingdom come," pray for its universal establishment. Some people then must begin to fulfil the evangelical promise, and cease to learn war any more. Now, Friends, seeing these things cannot be controverted, how do we long that your whole conversation be as becometh the gospel; and that while any of us are professing to scruple war, they may not in some parts of their conduct be inconsistent with that profession! With this view we are concerned to renew our caution of the year 1798, namely, 'We desire afresh to press upon all our members, the necessity of a peaceful and innocent demeanour amongst men; and especially, let all be careful not to seek or accept profit by any concern in the preparation so extensively making for war; for how reproachfully inconsistent would it be, to refuse an active compliance with warlike measures; and, at the same time, not to hesitate to enrich ourselves by the commerce and other circumstances dependent on war!' Friends, it is an awful thing to stand forth to the nation as the advocates of inviolable peace; and our testimony loses its efficacy in proportion to the want of consistency in any. And we think we are at this time peculiarly called to let our light shine with clearness, on account of the lenity shown us by government, and the readiness of magistrates to afford us all

* ISAIAH LXV. 25.

legal relief under suffering. And we can serve our country in no way more availingly, nor more acceptably to him who holds its prosperity at his disposal, than by contributing, all that in us lies, to increase the number of meek, humble, and self-denying christians.

From the same source, from which naturally springs, not only our testimony against war, but an unblemished conduct towards our government and our countrymen, namely, obedience to the law of Christ, arises also that stream of love to the brotherhood, which, if suffered to flow in our hearts with unobstructed course, would bear away all malice and guile, and cause all complaints of tale-bearing and detraction to cease in our borders. O the precious care that attends the mind in which christian charity is become habitual! Charity, saith the apostle, "hopeth all things."* It divulges not the faults of others, because, in its unbounded hope, it desires their removal without exposure. For the mind in which it dwells, ascribes its own preservation, and the cleansing of its former sins, to the unbounded love of God in Christ Jesus; and it prays that all may partake of the same benefit. How opposite that disposition, which delights to report evil, and to accuse! Shun it, dear Friends, as the poison of asps. Even the sacred writings emphatically denominate the grand adversary of mankind by the name of accuser of the brethren... "Follow," therefore, "peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."†

Now, dear Friends; you who know the truth, and have experienced in good degree, that it hath set you free from that to which you were by nature in bondage, relax not your attention to its gentle monitions: lest, whilst you are "busy here and there," you let any thing escape that is appointed for destruction. Such are all the practices and dispositions which prevent you from becoming fully "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."‡ But a jealousy, may we not say a holy jealousy, hath attended our minds, that some, by not following on to know the Lord, have ceased to preserve over their children and dependents the prevailing authority of good example: Some also, by continuing to seek increasing possessions in this life, have led their descendants as well as themselves into closer connection and fellowship with the spirit of the world. Thus, frequently, in the next generation the traces of christian simplicity and self-denial

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

† Heb. xii. 14, 15.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

are lamentably defaced, and in the succeeding one, nearly obliterated. To this cause, in a great degree, may be ascribed the number of families amongst us who retain little but the name: an evil, of which, as the remedy is difficult, we fervently desire to prevent the increase. Lay it therefore to heart, beloved brethren, lest you should inadvertently contribute to this already extensive grievance.

And O that we could awaken some of you, dear youth, who have been educated in a liberty, which we deplore on your account, because we believe that the gospel of Christ doth not allow it....that we could awaken you to serious reflection! If your rest should for a season, be disturbed by the sense of sin, of the danger of continuing in it, and of the future judgment which is its portion, you have no cause for utter dismay. Help is laid on one that is mighty. The sense of our transgressions leads to prayer for his secret, but almighty help; and as you are careful to close in with the inward intimations of his will, which are in fact the offers of his mercy, he will give you in due season “the oil of joy for mourning,” and “the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”*

In the narrow compass of an annual epistle, we cannot address all the states in the society, nor speak to all the subjects for which we feel concern. But since those subjects are not of a transient nature, we recommend to Friends, especially to our beloved youth, occasionally to peruse again the epistles of former years; and not to lay by, as things of temporary concernment, those records of this meeting's engagement to promote their present and eternal well-being, and to hold up a testimony to the gospel of Christ Jesus. To him therefore, who died for us, that “we should live together with him,”† we desire, dear Friends, to commend you. “Farewell. Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”‡

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOHN MERRYWEATHER,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

* ISAIAH lxi. 3. † I THESS. v. 10. ‡ 2 COR. xiii. 11.

EPISTLE CXXVIII—1805.

Dear Friends,

We trust that, through the continued mercy and assistance of the head of the church, we have not met in vain in this our annual assembly; because in contemplating the present state of our religious society, we have been enabled to attend to various subjects in which its welfare is involved, with calm deliberation, with the warmth of love, and with much harmony of mind. Some of the views which have at this time opened before us, we shall briefly attempt to unfold to you; saluting you, as we cordially do, in the love of our gracious and holy Redeemer and preserver. Friends, on all occasions, in every strait, in heights and in depths, seek to him, retire to him; let the advancement of his cause be your primary pursuit; and count it as a privilege inestimable, to be numbered among his lowly-minded followers.

We have received epistles from all the Yearly Meetings of our North American brethren; also one from Ireland. On the American continent, our Friends appear, in their collective capacity, to be steadily pursuing the path of apprehended duty, in the cause of righteousness; and, amidst all the discouragement which they, as well as we in this land, have met with, from cruel avarice, in pleading the cause of the oppressed Africans, it still lies near to their hearts, and a firm, forcible, yet cool remonstrance on behalf of that people, has been not long since presented to the general legislative body of the American states. The dismal subject of the slave-trade, the source of accumulating misery to Africa, of accumulating guilt to Britain, and of continued reproach to the holy religion, which, in common with our countrymen, we profess, has also claimed our sympathy in this meeting; and we desire our Friends may be individually prompt to entertain for these our fellow-men the sensations of pity, which on various occasions may arise. Where, Friends, shall we find a juster cause of regret, than to see a nation professing christianity, pouring forth from her harbours numerous equipments, not designed to improve and exalt, but to degrade, enslave and consign to misery, those very nations, to which, in recompense for ages of injury and insult, she owes the benefits of brotherly kindness, and christian example!

The usual accounts which we have received from the several Quarterly Meetings in Great Britain denote that all are not steadily concerned to walk as becomes the simplicity of our profession. We have been introduced into concern of mind on this ac-

count, and have endeavoured to administer some remedy for the complaint ; but we desire also to acknowledge, that we find room for encouragement in the number of lively and judicious Friends still preserved and qualified for labour, and of others (thanks to the shepherd and bishop of souls) still arising from among our beloved youth. To both these we would say, Hold on your way, and may your hands be strong, as your reward is sure.

The amount of sufferings this year in Great-Britain and Ireland is ten thousand eight hundred and eleven pounds. Demands of a military nature have occasioned about sixteen hundred pounds of it ; and one Friend has borne his testimony by suffering three months imprisonment.

Now, dear Friends ; hear, we beseech you, the word of exhortation. What hinders the advancement of our society in its christian progress ; seeing the holy high priest of our profession is willing to lead us to complete sanctification ? What, but the carnal mind, operating in various and insidious forms ? We do not tax all who embark in large concerns in trade, with an undue desire after riches ; but we much fear that the effect, which their schemes are likely to have upon themselves and their connections, as affecting their condition both religious and civil, is not duly regarded. The love of money is said in scripture to be the root of all evil ; and we believe it may be shown, that honest industry and moderation of desire are roots of incalculable benefit to the humble christian. We feel for many of our Friends in limited circumstances, in this day of increased, and possibly increasing expense ; but we would caution such, and particularly those who are setting out in life, against imitating the manner of living of those whose means are more abundant. We wish, Friends, to call you, not to penuriousness but to economy ; and we particularly desire that all such as have families of children, even if in more affluent circumstances, would inure them to early industry, and not to habits of depending too much on the services of domestics. For this latter, and useful class, we also desire to plead, and to request those who have the privilege of ability to employ them, to sympathize with them in their labours, to delight to render them happy, and even to seek for that disposition that can lead them along as fellow-travellers in the road to the city of God. Various are the means by which this may be attempted. The principal one certainly is, the keeping of the mind attentive to the discoveries of truth ; but seeing, we doubt not, that a perusal of the scriptures is the frequent employ of many families, we desire that the servants may be made partakers of the benefits resulting from the practice, and from occasional opportunities of retirement in spirit. Indeed we are afresh

engaged to press upon Friends a diligent acquaintance with the sacred records, and a diligent endeavour to store the minds of their tender offspring with the great truths of christian redemption. In so doing you may implant, in the susceptible and retentive minds of your children, principles of preservation against the temptations of future life ; and resemble those of old time, who, smitten with the power and goodness of the Lord of life and glory, when personally on earth, are said to have brought, with divine approbation, little children to Christ. Thus imbued with a knowledge of the wonderful effects of heavenly love which the evangelists relate, they will be prepared also to receive his spiritual appearance in their hearts, according to our holy profession ; as well as duly to appreciate, and delight in the records of the christian faith and practice of our pious predecessors. With their history also we think it important that our youth should be more acquainted, than we fear many are. It is a history abounding with examples of what the love of Christ is able to effect, in doing, or in suffering. It is a practical comment on the words of the great apostle : “ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? ” Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”*

On the calamitous subject of war, we do not feel much now to say. Friends, you are not ignorant of what adorns our profession with respect to this subject. Only this would we say, make it not a topic of conversation. Guard against placing your dependence on fleets and armies ; be peaceable yourselves, in words and actions ; and pray to the Father of the universe that he would breathe the spirit of reconciliation into the hearts of his erring and contending creatures.

Friends, seek peace and pursue it. Ye are called to love. O that the smallest germ of enmity might be eradicated from our enclosure ! And verily there is a soil in which it cannot live ; but naturally withers and dies. This soil is christian humility : a state highly becoming, and indispensable, for a being who depends continually on the favour of his Lord ; a state in which of all others he can most acceptably approach his presence ; and a state which naturally conducts frail man to love and compassion

for the companions of his frailty and poverty, yet his fellow-partakers of the offered riches of the gospel.

Dear Friends, we believe that the Lord's goodness is still towards his people; and that his language to them yet remains to be similar to that, which of old was conveyed by the prophet. "O that there were such a heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always; that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever."*

Signed in, and on behalf of the Meeting, by
JOSEPH GURNEY,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXIX—1806.

Dear Friends,

We find, in meeting in this our annual assembly, a renewal of lively zeal for promoting the righteousness which is of Christ, and for removing, as far as in us lies, the causes which obstruct it. We trust that our meeting is not only professedly in his name; but, as we are given to derive strength and encouragement in his cause, from the mutual communication of our feelings and exercises of mind, that he still owns us, however unworthy; and grants us, by being at times baptized into the sense of our own weakness, to seek, with more earnestness, his everlasting strength. In the desire therefore that ye may be built up a people truly christian; that "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xiv. 17.) may increase and abound; we again convey to you the salutation of love unfeigned. We beseech you to consider the holy gradation of righteousness, peace, and joy; and to mark that the first step is that most comprehensive attainment, righteousness.—Righteousness is immutable justice. It leaves no duty unfilled. Man has his full share of love from man; and God, his due reverence, adoration, and praise. Peace then flows as a river, and joy in the Holy Spirit completes the gracious purpose of christian redemption. "Happy that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." (Psalm, cxliv. 15.)

But, Friends, though we are thus favoured to see, and to approve things which are excellent, yet when we review the state of

* DEUT. v. 29.

our religious Society, and scrutinize into the conduct of its members, we are often obliged to observe that an enemy is at work ; that earth sometimes obtrudes into the place of heaven ; and that self-love in many is more conspicuous than self-denial. You know that the subjects of our inquiry on these occasions are arranged under different heads ; and that it becomes from time to time our concern, to remind you of your duty respecting many of them. When we ask the question, " Is there any growth in the truth ?" modesty, were there nothing else, might occasion a doubtful reply. But nothing needs prevent every man, endued with the light of Christ in himself, from endeavouring to answer this most important query plainly to his own conscience. As the vigorous tree brings forth its fruit in its season, so if any man grow in the Truth, he will bring forth the fruits of Truth, even the fruit of the Spirit, so well described by the apostle to the Galatian converts. (Gal. v. 22.) And what obstructs this growth in any ? We reply, the love of ease : the dread of conflict. But as winter and storms promote the well-being of the outward creation, so tribulation and conflict improve the christian. They have their appropriate and appointed end, in the work of sanctification ; they arise not out of the dust, but are sent or permitted in the proper seasons : and whoever seeks to escape without his share, rejects the very means of his advancement, and scarcely can hope to attain his due " measure of " the stature of the fullness of Christ : " (Eph. iv. 13.) a state of which the same apostle speaks, as attainable by all.

Now, beloved brethren, a subject, a deeply interesting subject, hath intervened among our deliberations on the state of our Society ; and its long-felt importance induces us to suffer it here also to interrupt the current of our christian counsel. No longer since than the last year we excited your attention afresh to the sufferings of the Africans, and spoke of the continuance of the cruel slave trade as of an accumulation of misery and of guilt. How then do we now rejoice in having to proclaim that this torrent of iniquity is arrested in its progress ; that an important restriction of the trade has taken place ; that the annual enslaving of thousands is prevented ; and that the prospect again opens, with increased brightness, of " a termination to the wrongs of Africa ! " *

Let us therefore thank God, and take courage ; and still persevere in the support of those testimonies and practices, to which christian love gives rise, and which Christ requires of his church. And, in order that we may be able to do this, let love, pure, unconquerable love, reign in our hearts. We have often expatiated

* Yearly Meeting Epistle, 1792.

on this topic ; but yet we must violate our feelings, if we suppress some further observations on it at this time. Friends, remember, that to be made perfect in love, (1 John, iv. 17, 18.) is a high state of christian excellence, and not attainable but by the sacrifice of selfish passions. No degree of resentment can consist with this state. Some persons are apt to profess that they can forgive those whom they suppose to have injured them, when such are brought to know, and acknowledge their fault. But that is little else than a disguised pride, seeking for superiority. The love which Christ commanded to his church goes further than that. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." (John, xv. 12.) And how did the Lord love the world ? Let the apostle answer. "God commandeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) And, Friends, mark and remember his gracious dying words, when praying for his very persecutors, he said, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." (Luke, xxiii. 34.) And shall we expect access for our feeble prayers, at the throne of grace, if we harbour any ill will to our fellow travellers towards immortality ? Let us hear again the Saviour of men : "And when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any." (Mark, xi. 25.) He doth not allow time for seeing the injuring person become submissive ; but,—Standing, forgive : for "If ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." (Verse 26.) O, the excellence of christian love, and the temper of forgiveness ! It is the indispensable requisite in that spiritual worship to which we as a people more peculiarly bear testimony ; yea, is it not the very balm of life, and the passport to heaven ?

Thus have we hinted at some of the leading characteristics of the christian ; we have attempted to hold up the standard of truth ; and we tenderly entreat all our Friends who feel the necessity of measuring themselves by it, and are in great degree exemplary persons themselves, to be frequently attending to their respective gifts, in order to be helpful to others : for we are members one of another, if we are really members of that body of which the head is Christ. This mutual care is a fundamental principle of our christian discipline : this mutual care hath brought us together at this time.

We have received this year Epistles from all the Meetings with which this Meeting usually corresponds. The most remarkable feature in the intelligence which, from these and other sources, we receive respecting our brethren in North America, is the great and successful diligence of some of their Yearly Meetings in promo-

ting the civilization of the Indian natives. We find that our Meeting for Sufferings has very properly diffused this intelligence among Friends; and impressed with a desire of co-operating in a work so benevolent, this Meeting has recommended a contribution, to assist our American brethren in their very worthy pursuit; and we doubt not that Friends will cheerfully embrace this opportunity of testifying our unity with their labours.

Although, as we have already remarked, in the accounts which come up from the several branches of this Meeting, we are affected with noting various particulars which we deplore, yet we also are encouraged in observing that the good cause remains dear to many; that fresh instances offer themselves to view of zeal in the Lord's service; and that some serious persons are still seeking to be united to us in consequence of conviction.

The amount of sufferings brought in this year is about ten thousand three hundred and fourteen pounds: of which some part is for demands of military nature; but the chief part, ecclesiastical. And Friends, while we are endeavouring to bear testimony against war, let us show, by our inoffensive, quiet demeanour, that we are truly children of peace; and while we refuse the claims of a priesthood from which we conscientiously dissent, let us be diligent in waiting on the great Minister of the true tabernacle. This, you know, Friends, is the purpose of our assembling together in silence: and though there is among us at times but little instrumental ministry, or none, let not this produce any abatement of diligence in the duty. Instrumental ministry, in the life and power of the gospel, is a great favour to the church; but the distinguishing excellence of the christian dispensation is the immediate communication with our heavenly Father, through the inward revelation of the Spirit of Christ. Let us, therefore, brethren, submit to the baptizing operations of the Holy Spirit, which purify the soul, and produce the capacity for communion with God.

Now "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. (2 Cor. xiii. 14.)

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

ARNEE FRANK,

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CXXX—1807.

Dear Friends,

Receive, we beseech you, the salutation of our undiminished and renewed love : may we not reverently say, of our love in the gospel of Christ. For we desire to be as the messengers of good tidings, to allure you to increasing degrees of dedication to the cause of truth, and to make you partake of the encouragement which we are mercifully allowed to feel, by meeting thus together as with one accord. But though we have again cause to confess that there is strength in the union of exercise, in a joint engagement of spirit, we also entreat you to remember that “ the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” (Rom. x. 12.) We believe, as a frequent application of heart to the Lord is the practice of Friends in their remote allotments, that he will enrich them with due portions of his wisdom and strength. Thus will he restrain in them the dispositions which tend towards the world, he will invigorate those which have their origin and accomplishment in heaven, and he will even make glad for them the solitary place. (Isa. xxxv. 1.)

On the particular inspection this year into the state of our religious society, various objects tending to its welfare have engaged our attention ; some of which we shall endeavour briefly to lay before you. But first we are inclined to express our thankfulness for an event which concerns not us only, but incalculable multitudes of our fellow-creatures, our fellow-possessors of the faculty of reason—our fellow objects of the redemption which comes by Christ. We scarcely need name the Abolition of the Slave Trade. We view it as one of the most important acts of public, national righteousness, which ever dignified the councils of any government ; and our minds have been directed in secret prayer to the Almighty Parent of the universe, that he may be pleased to regard this kingdom for good ; and direct its future councils to such future acts of justice and mercy as may promote his glory, in the harmony of his rational creation.

We may also here mention that we learn by the accounts which we have received from our brethren in America, that their attention in assisting some of the Indian nations to attain to the benefits of civilization, is still continued with vigour and with increasing success. We are gratified with being informed of the contribution which Friends in this nation have raised in order to participate in this work of benevolence. Six thousand pounds of it are already

put in train to be remitted to America ; about nine hundred more are ready to follow, and we have cordial assurances from our Friends abroad, that they will readily take upon them " the administration of this service : " which we trust will not only prosper, to the advancement of our Indian brethren in the scale of civil life ; but, like the gift of old, mentioned by the apostle, may be " abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God." (2 Cor. ix. 12.)

Now, dear Friends, seeing christian duty is not a complex system, but consists of a few and simple parts, it cannot be expected that great variety should be found in the subjects, on which, from time to time, we are induced to address you. It is a peculiar glory of the gospel that it remains the same. Love to God, and love to our neighbour are its grand and primary divisions ; each harmonizing with the other ; neither subsisting apart : to the latter we immediately refer the general care which our christian discipline promotes ; and we believe it is also the ground of that more private, but not less beneficial care, which we long to see subsisting in vigour in christian families. You know our annual inquiry : " Do Friends endeavour, by example and precept, to train up their children, servants, and those under their care, in a religious life and conversation, consistent with our christian profession ? " The query then descends to four particulars, all of them indeed important, but we now hint at them only to observe, that, important and indispensable as we believe they are for us, they are not to be made the sole criterion for judging whether religious education has been duly and successfully given. Consider, dear Friends, what subjection of spirit, what care of conduct, and what self-restraint go to make up a good example : tempered, as it should be, with sweetness of manner, seconded by holy firmness and recommended by its being manifest that yourselves are seeking " first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." (Mat. vi. 33.) These are truly great, but they are attainable objects ; and equally the duty of every one who lays claim to the christian character ; for though all are not called to the same stations in the militant Church, all are invited to heaven ; and the general terms of invitation are alike to all. O Friends, did we all thus seek and attain to the things that are excellent, precept, impressive precept, would not be withheld. Love would inspire it, prudence would direct it, both as to season and quantity, and what reason have we not for hoping that the Lord himself would render it availing by his blessing ?

Our query as we have said, then descends to particulars ; of which we shall only now advert to one, and that, because it hath renewedly at this time occupied our attention, called forth expres-

sions of the sense of several brethren, and furnished our meeting with no inconsiderable subject of consolation. We believe there is an increased attention in Friends in various parts, not only to promote in their families the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, but to make it the employment of a portion of time daily. We commend this practice, and we believe that if the heads of families are careful in cultivating the seed of truth in themselves, there will be so little danger of the custom becoming formal, that it will not unfrequently be the means of quickening the minds of those concerned it: more especially if a subsequent pause be allowed; in order that the sacred truths which have been read may have time to make their due impression on the mind; or that the mind may have time to rise in secret aspiration after a blessing.

We find, at this, as at other times, that several persons have been added to us by conviction. We desire it may also have been by conversion, from form to power. Such truly convinced and converted, are a strength to us. They know the sacrifice which they have made for their present condition, and value it accordingly. They have bought the truth, and are so far from desiring to sell it, that they are concerned that others should possess the same enjoyment. But we are sometimes grieved that persons finding their way, and probably through self-denial, into our society, do not always retain their ground. The salt doth not always retain its savour. (Mat. v. 13.) In tenderness therefore, of heart we entreat the newly convinced not to esteem their admission as a period of rest from conflict. It rather requires a deeper exercise. And we beseech Friends among whom such may dwell, to treat them with great circumspection as well as kindness. Beware of hurting them by any ill example. They may be offended, and, if they are sincere, they are in the number of those whom we are cautioned not to offend. (Mat. xviii. 6.) On the other hand, they are tender and inexperienced, and they may be laden with the concerns of our discipline faster than their strength will bear. Thus, Friends, on every occasion we see that sound judgment, and sound practice, require depth, and solidity. Let us then keep in view, and earnestly desire to be endued with that discernment which is the means, under direction of the holy Head, of edifying the body of Christ.

The amount of the sufferings which have this year been reported to this Meeting, from our several Quarterly and other Meetings, and from Ireland, is upwards of ten thousand nine hundred pounds: chiefly on account of tithes and those called church-rates, and also for sundry demands of a military nature.

Before we conclude, we are disposed to turn our attention to you, dear youth, who are rising up to manhood. To you we

would extend a tender, yet an earnest invitation. We are interested in your happiness, the church will have need of your help, and there is nothing that we desire more for you, than to see you advancing, in ranks of righteousness, to the christian warfare. And your qualification will lie in humility and meekness, seeing it is the meek whom the Lord teacheth his way. (Psalm, xxv. 9.) But, dear young men, in this very meeting we have been made to lament, because so many of you evidently prefer the gratifications of nature which is corrupt, and which tends to corruption, to the cross of Christ which corrects its hurtful propensities, and to "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." (Tit. ii. 11.) Many of you have a degree of love to our holy cause. Why then will you pursue a line of conduct which tends to lay it waste? Do not despise the counsel of experience. Many have tried the path which some of you tread, and have found it lead to distress; and happy are those whose course is interrupted, and who do not persist in their progress, before it leads to final distress.

But though we thus speak, there are also many of our beloved youth, who are rising and risen into a state of maturity, of whom "we are persuaded better things,—and things that accompany salvation." (Heb. vi. 9.) Dear young Friends, of whatever rank, sex, or station, it is cordial to behold you, it is cordial to salute you in the fellowship of the gospel, and to bid you God speed. Hold on your way, turn not aside to the right hand or the left. You may have tribulation, but be of good cheer: your holy Leader hath overcome the world. (John, xvi. 33.) Thus, when some of those who now address you shall be beheld no more in this scene of conflict, but, if they continue faithful, will partake of the joy of their Lord, and of your Lord, you may stand in their places with holy firmness, be a blessing to succeeding generations, and "show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Pet. ii. 9.)

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JAMES BAKER,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXXI—1808.

Dear Friends,

We are disposed again to pursue the current of christian good will, which has so often induced us to furnish you with a written memorial of our concern and love for our brethren, dispersed in their various allotments in this kingdom and elsewhere; and thus to fix, for your advantage, some traces of those impressions, which while reviewing the present state of our society, have been made on our minds. If we are at all instruments in the hand of the Lord to “comfort the feeble minded” among you, to “support the weak,” (1 Thess. v. 14,) to encourage the upright, or to arouse the careless; we pray that he, by his almighty influence, may firmly establish in your hearts every good purpose to which our words may excite you; and bless every cup of consolation which he may enable us to hand forth. Thus, dear Friends, again we salute you in love—in gospel love. How animating is the ability to consider ourselves the common children of one benevolent and all powerful Parent, to depend upon him for our own preservation, and to implore him for that of our neighbour! surely! shall we not thus draw nigh to the accomplishment of those eternal commands, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself?” (Luke, x. 27.)

The accounts which we have received at this meeting respecting the present state of our religious Society, in the several Quarterly Meetings, continue to affect us with the relation of divers instances of remisness in religious duty, which do not meet with their due share of admonition: nevertheless we believe that, in other cases, the diligence of upright Friends, to give counsel where it is obviously necessary, has produced effects which should encourage perseverance. The spirit which tends to scatter and destroy, unless vigilantly withstood, is continually at work; and we request you, beloved brethren, to continue vigilant, and not to be satisfied with any former exertions, whilst the lamented evils remain. We call upon you, by that love and compassion which, if you are in your places you must feel for the negligent, not to slacken in your endeavours to stir them up to diligence. Be persevering and patient. “Stablish your hearts.” (James, v. 8.) This exhortation has been drawn from us by more than a jealousy, that such as are in the frequent neglect of our religious meetings, are suffered too long to remain without counsel. Counsel, we

know, may be disregarded ; but blessed is he, who, under the holy influence of love, having dispensed it in due season, can feel himself clear of owing any thing to his brother on this account.

Our concern for the preservation of brotherly love remains strong and unabated. When assembled in this Meeting, we have special cause to know the invigorating, uniting effects of it. Therefore, were there no other inducement, we should still be disposed, from time to time, to renew our earnest and pressing exhortation, that it may abound and flourish amongst our dear brethren in religious profession. Enmity, even in a small degree, pollutes the mind, and renders it unfit to approach with acceptance that pure and holy Being, of whom the beloved disciple thus emphatically testified, " God is love." (1 John, iv. 8.) Do we not peculiarly lament the wide spread of distress, which the spirit of contention is, even now, occasioning to suffering humanity ? This, though it differs in degree, springs from the same root as private ill will. Therefore, a people abhorrent of war, if they are consistent, will watch against the smallest bud of enmity, as it is conceived, on any occasion, in the heart. And the man who, in the school of Christ, hath learned the useful lesson of self-denial, will often make a sacrifice of his own will and opinion, though he may esteem them to be right, rather than persist in them, at the expense of christian fellowship.

It is much in the power of those who have the care of young children, to prepare their minds for the salutary restraints of the cross of Christ ; and those who thus co-operate with his Holy Spirit, which early visits the tender and flexible mind, may expect (and what better can they seek ?) his all-sufficient blessing upon themselves and their offspring. Therefore, ye fathers, and ye mothers, let us entreat you to consider the earliest subjection of the will as the first step in education. It will generally insure to you that desirable ascendancy over the minds of your children, which will prevent the need of future severity ; it will enable you to govern them by love ; and thus you will be rendering your own way more easy, at the same time that you are serving the Lord.

And Friends, we beseech you, as their understandings ripen, to take due opportunities of opening to them the benefits of the restraints which your duty leads you to impose. Among some of the most irksome to the lively dispositions of youth, are often those which relate to speech and dress. But as we know that the ground of our dissent from the world in these things, is christian simplicity ; so we know by experience, that they are often the means of defence against temptation, to mingle in the company of such as, not being thus subject to holy restraint, are unsuitable examples for youth to observe and to follow. And, when by the gentle in-

timations of truth in their ripening understandings, they are entered on a course of self denial, they will feel you doubly dear to them, for having led them on the way they should go, and will bless the Lord on your behalf.

Thus have we again touched upon some of the most important objects of the constant care of this meeting, and indeed all those who desire to see our society builded up as a city that is compact together. "Jerusalem," saith the psalmist, "is builded as a city that is compact together; whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel." (Psalm, cxxii. 3, 4.)

We may now turn from subjects which concern every state in life; and direct the course of our christian counsel to the states, more in particular. And first, you who are not entrusted with much of the possessions of this life, you are still the objects of our constant care. The society has long endeavoured to consult your interests, and to place within your reach whatever is necessary for your welfare, and for that of your offspring. And you are equally the care of Him who provides for the sparrows: to his ear your access is as easy as that of any condition amongst men; and if, by his holy assistance, and by a conformity to his will, you become truly poor in spirit, yours is the kingdom of heaven. (Mat. v. 3.) But, dear Friends, suffer us to remind you, that there is not a passion that can infest the rich, which may not also, in a degree subversive of your peace, be fostered in your minds. You may covet, and give way to pride and anger, and to all the "foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. vi. 9.) Therefore, do you partake of the universal necessity of paying strict attention to Christ's sacred injunction, when addressing himself to his immediate followers, he closed his address with these memorable words; "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." (Mark, xiii. 37.)

As for you, dear Friends, who occupy what are termed the middle stations of life, you have every cause to bless the Lord for the sphere in which he hath permitted you to move. In you, seems fulfilled the wish of Agur: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." (Prov. xxx. 8, 9.) Among your number the society has often found many of its more useful members, of its more able advocates. Be content therefore, with your stations. Seek not great things for yourselves; yea, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." (Romans, xii. 16.) But, above all things, "Follow on to know the Lord;" (Hosea, vi. 3.) or, if you have not known him and served him, fully and faithfully, seek him "with a perfect heart,

and with a willing mind," for if you seek him, he will be found of you; (1 Chron. xxviii. 9,) and you will remain to be, as many of you have been, supports of the building, under the protecting providence of the Lord; who is the sole and true builder of his spiritual house, the "house of prayer for all people." (See Isaiah, lvi. 7.)

And you who are entrusted with much of the good things of this life, you who cannot disclaim the title of affluent—we believe there are among you many good stewards of the temporal things committed to your trust; yet we desire that others may duly consider, whether they are so "rich in faith," as to be "heirs of the kingdom," (James, ii, 5,) being fruitful in those good works which are produced by faith. Though, Friends, you may not have to labour with your hands, the cause of truth has business of importance for you to do; and it may be promoted or obstructed by right or wrong application of your property. Much responsibility lies on you; your property is an additional article in the account; and we desire that you may be so awake to a sense of these things, as to be prepared to render up your accounts with joy, and to receive the answer of "Well done." The poor and the rich have their appropriate virtues; and, at the same time that each is required to be content and to be humble, we believe it may be truly said, that as contentment is a peculiar ornament of the poor, so is humility of the rich.

Your station in life subjects you, more than others, to be tried by associating with other wealthy persons, among the people at large, with whom the cross of Christ is often in too little esteem. You may be leavened by their conversation and example: and it may operate still more sensibly and rapidly upon your children. Therefore we tenderly entreat you, for your own sake, for that of your offspring whom ye are bound to protect, and for the sake of the cause of Truth—we entreat you, dear Friends, we beseech you "by the mercies of God.—Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For," continues the apostle, "I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more—highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Rom. xii. 1, 2, 3.)

But, how shall we address a state lamentably to be found in every condition of life; and from which few places are wholly free—that state which despises counsel, and places itself almost out of the reach of advice? Dear, but mistaken Friends, it is difficult to *speak* to your state, but we *may* pray to the Father of mercies,

that *he* would in mercy *plead* with you. And we beseech you take time to be serious. Be solicitous about your eternal well-being. The restraint of the Spirit of Truth is the armour that protects the soul ; and if you will not be invested with it, you are open to the repeated and increasing assaults of the destroyer ; and how will you at length be prepared and found worthy “ to stand before the Son of Man ?” (Luke, xxi. 36.)

In this Meeting we have received Epistles from our American brethren in most of the states, showing the continuance of their zeal in the cause of righteousness, and encouraging us to perseverance ; the particulars of any of which it does not seem needful now to detail. The amount of the sufferings of Friends this year in Great Britain and Ireland, chiefly for tithes, those called church-rates, and military demands, is upwards of eleven thousand seven hundred and seventy pounds ; and two Friends have been imprisoned for not having found substitutes in the militia. But we are by no means inclined to complain of the conduct of magistrates ; on the contrary, we believe in many places there is a disposition in the hearts of magistrates, which induces them to protect us from suffering to the utmost limit of the law ; and we desire that Friends may, on their part, by a meek and peaceable conduct, always insure, and never forfeit, their good opinion. In so conducting ourselves, we adorn our profession, and suffer our light to shine.

Now, dear Friends, of every rank, state, and condition, let us endeavour to be one in the Lord : that he may shower down of his mercies, gifts and grace upon all. This will keep each in his proper place. The young will be mild, submissive and teachable ; and will become early acquainted with that power which is their only safe conductor through life, and their hope in death. These are near to our hearts. The very remembrance of them awakens our tenderest feeling, and prompts our prayer to the Lord for their preservation. The middle-aged will stand firm in their day, as watchmen upon the wall, and as valiants, having on the armour of light, to withstand the attacks of the enemy. And the aged will have to rejoice both in the retrospective, and prospective view. The past will recall to their gladdened remembrance the numberless mercies of the Lord ; and the future, through the power of an endless life, and the redeeming virtue of Christ Jesus our Lord, will open to them the prospect, and satisfy them with the assurance, of being *his for ever*, Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOHN WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXXII—1809.

Dear Friends,

In turning our attention to you, in your various allotments, we are encouraged to offer you this testimonial of our love; a love which is felt to be the blessed consequence of our endeavour to serve the Lord, from whom it springs. We desire that you also may be furnished and replenished with this greatest of spiritual gifts. It will contribute to sweeten life; and through the efficacy of redeeming mercy, it will disarm death of its terror. In pursuit, however, of this "pearl of great price," oppositions will arise, during your state of probation: yet do not be dismayed, but be patient. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit," even "of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient. (James, v. 7, 8.) Remember that the fruit which you seek, is not only peace, in such proportion as the Lord shall see meet to bestow it, in time; but peace, in eternal fulness, with him for ever.

The subjects of our care, in this Meeting, have been conducted with much of that brotherly love and condescension which our christian principles enjoin; and we have been permitted from time to time to experience that refreshment of mind, which induces us to believe that our Meeting is still owned by our Holy Head and High Priest, Christ Jesus.

Our present engagements have been similar to those which have had our attention in preceding Meetings. At our last, we believed it right, by a special minute, to urge our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings to stir up those to whom is entrusted the care of children and young people, to a conscientious discharge of that sacred duty. We are now disposed to express our warm desire that the youth may co-operate with our concern, by being willing early and seriously to watch over their own conduct, by the help of that "true light" (John i. 9.) which is not withheld from the humble mind. Dear young Friends, be not only willing to submit to the gentle admonition and restraint of those who desire for you, above every other attainment, a growth in the holy fear and love of God; but be watchful even over your own thoughts: for thought is the spring of action. Out of the heart, as was observed by our blessed Lord, proceed those evil practices which defile the man. And if you should, as yet, be startled at the supposition of defilement, let us say, in consonant language, that in the heart are conceived those evil propensities, which, if unrestrained, will mar the work of sanctification. Above all, do not forget or neglect to let your souls arise in frequent supplication to the Pre-

server of Men, who hears the prayer of the humble, and is well pleased with the dedication of youth—the sacrifice of the beginning of your strength.

A part of the object of the advice which we have mentioned as having been the late concern of this Meeting to give to parents, was to train up their families in plainness—a comprehensive word. At this time, on reviewing the subject, a fear has prevailed among us, that not a few elder Friends, and even some who take part in our discipline, have not been sufficiently exemplary; particularly in the furniture of their houses. It seems, therefore, right to caution all against giving way, in this respect, to the varying, and often costly fashions of the age. Though it is a weakness which does not seem to savour so much of personal pride, as does vain attire; yet it bespeaks a mind engaged with trifles, and a fondness for show which is inconsistent with the christian character; and it disqualifies for duly advising such as may rush into further degrees of extravagance.

The amount of the sufferings of Friends, of which an account has been this year brought to the Meeting from Great Britain and Ireland, is upwards of thirteen thousand pounds. They are principally for tithes, priests' demands, and those culled church-rates, and a considerable part for military demands. A few young men have suffered a temporary imprisonment under the militia laws. We retain an unabated concern that Friends may be strengthened to support, on principle, our testimony against a ministry not depending on the fresh opening of the Spirit of Christ in the heart, and supported by pecuniary means. We believe also, that this testimony to the purity of this genuine and Gospel ministry, strongly evinces that the formation of our Society was not an effort of human wisdom; neither is there any thing more calculated to sap our foundation, and render us a degenerate church, than a general departure from this principle.

We are inclined also, dear Friends, to draw your attention to the root of our testimony against war. It is no other than christian love, and that righteousness which produces peace, quietness, and perpetual assurance, as its natural fruit. This draws the mind away from those passions and desires, in which are laid the foundations of contest. Let us then frequently examine our hearts, yea, let us prove our own selves, and see how far the seed of contention withers, and a resignation to suffer is cherished there. And since, as we have mentioned, some of our young men *have* suffered, and more may probably suffer, imprisonment, we are deeply desirous that they may walk consistently with their testimony in every respect: showing by their conduct that they truly follow a Master, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

At this Meeting, as at former ones, we have received Epistles from our brethren in the several Yearly Meetings in North America, and one from that of Ireland. On the continent, these meetings appear generally attentive to the important concerns of religious society; a care to sympathize with the oppressed objects of slavery remains, and we believe will remain as long as the evil exists: and the more recent engagement of some of these Yearly Meetings, to diffuse the benefits of civilization among the native Indian tribes of America, subsists in unabated vigour. The account from Ireland is encouraging, and induces an animating hope, not only that the Yearly Meeting there is favoured with zeal and discernment, but that many individuals are under a preparation of heart to become advocates of our christian testimonies and principles.

In the silent lapse of time, several of those who have long been endeavouring to support the cause of truth, and divers who have been wont to meet with us for that purpose in this annual assembly have attained the limit of their allotted probation, and we humbly trust, are safely arrived beyond the reach of sorrow. Of such events we have again, at this Meeting, received some impressive accounts. We perceive the apparent chasm which their removal occasions; but we may be animated in observing their peaceful close—how, as they approached the confines of that “city which hath foundations, (Heb. xi. 10.) their hearts were filled with hope, and their tongues employed in praise:—as it were, the beginning of a song, of which the melody is unlimited and the duration eternal. “The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.” (Psalm, cxviii. 14.)

We are also comforted in observing from year to year, and not often more than the present year, a succession arisen and arising, of such as appear to be endeavouring to serve the Lord in uprightness of heart: some in one way, and some in another. In the Lord’s service, there is employment for every talent with which he has endowed his creature man: each should be employed in the proper and allotted department; and all to his praise. “There are diversities of gifts,” saith the apostle, “but the same spirit.” (1 Cor. xii. 4.)

Having therefore no reason to think that the great Head of the Church hath forsaken us, but that he is still willing, as our hearts stand open to him, to qualify for judges and for counsellors, let us endeavour, by his gracious assistance, and with unceasing prayer to him for that holy help, to hold on our way. And you tender youth, yet in that most critical time of life, in which men often receive the bias which forms them into servants of their God, or warps them away from his fear, and sometimes almost irretrievably, let us

again, in conclusion, press you to ponder the path of your feet. The earlier you are devoted to his service, the better servants you will be. And he is served in little things, and not in those only which appear great, and highly beneficial to others. But what attainment is greater than to be able in a pure heart to say, "Thy will be done?" and this, by the Spirit of Him who taught his immediate followers after this manner to pray, may be attained even in childhood. It will be a most precious morning sacrifice to the Lord, who hath given you life, who stands ready, as you faithfully serve him, to store it with blessings; and who can finally crown it with a peaceful immortality.

Signed in, and on behalf of the Meeting, by
JOHN WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXXIII—1810.

Dear Friends,

In turning our minds towards saluting you with an Epistle, and particularly as the subject came more closely under attention, an encouragement was felt, which induces us to believe that in so doing we shall be in the way of our duty: and when that precious love which binds together the various members of the spiritual body is in dominion, this duty is freely fulfilled. And as the collected Church of Christ, gathered into his name, and baptized into his Spirit, must abide under this powerful influence to guide its proceedings; so also the members, in their separate allotments, can find no surer means of being preserved, each in the way of his own duty, or of contributing, each his share, to the common welfare, than by experiencing "the love of God" renewedly "shed abroad" in their hearts. (Rom. v. 5.) But we know that the love of earthly things too often prevails, the harmony of even religious societies is interrupted, yea, even many become spiritually "robbed and spoiled." [Isa. xlii. 22.] Dear Friends, all of you who may hear or read this our tender salutation, let us address you in the language of the evangelical prophet, "Arise, shine:" [chap. lx. i.] you to whose hearts the Lord, in his never failing mercy, may direct the words of his servants, which of you can say that your "light is" not "come?" [ibid.] Let it then be displayed in conduct. Keep in view the two great commandments of perpetual obligation: the love of God, and the love of our

neighbour. The latter is the ground of our christian discipline ; and the former is the life of our spiritual worship. And we are persuaded that if, through the redeeming power of the Lord, and by continuing in his fear and under his guidance, we become settled in these holy dispositions :—if, to use other words, with gratitude, watchfulness, and lowliness of mind, we improve these holy gifts of grace, they will never be taken from us ; but will remain and expand, when the veil of flesh shall be removed, and a nearer access be opened to the fountain of love, in a blissful immortality.

At these annual assemblies, when we are receiving accounts of the state of the Meetings which this Yearly Meeting superintends, we have too often occasion of grief, in hearing of defects which do not comport with a people professing to be spiritually minded. Such are from various quarters reported to us this year. Yet we are not disposed to enumerate them now ; though we can readily trace their origin. But let us remind every one amongst us, that it is better to be willing to trace, each the origin of his own defect, than to compose his mind by considering it a small one. The more we can abide under a sense of our own wants, the readier and the more earnestly shall we apply for help to Him upon whom help is laid. And probably the natural unwillingness there is in the creature to feel in itself a testimony to its own unworthiness, is one great reason why no more are raised up as testimony bearers to the Lord's all-sufficiency and goodness. It can scarcely be denied, that faithful labourers in his vineyard are still wanting. We noticed in our last year's Epistle, the removal of many who, according to our power of spiritual perception, might bear that appellation. The information of the present year has added to the list of the dead, who, we doubt not, have died in the Lord ; and is a repeated call to the living, to look well to their foundations. This call also has additional force, when we consider that other faithful servants are verging to the same solemn period : a period which, though to them it may be unspeakably blessed, will deprive the church of their labours, and of the secret travail, sympathy, and prayer of their spirits.

It is certainly not easy to compress the wants of the church in one comprehensive term : but it seems as if one of the watch-words, peculiarly worthy of attention in the present day were **DEDICATION**. Remember, dear visited Friends, that when Christ invites you to submit to his yoke, he declares it to be easy ; while the yoke of disobedience is known to be heavy. Thus, while we are inviting you to faithfulness, by the losses which we are ready to deplore, in the departure of servants and of hand-maids ; and by the joy that opened on their view as they were en-

tering on that nearer union with their Lord : with Him “ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named ;” (Eph. 3. 15.) we may truly say, brethren, sisters, ye are all “ called unto liberty,” (Gal. v. 13.) even “ the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 21.) And it is with thankfulness that we perceive, as also we hinted last year, that very many of our beloved young Friends of both sexes, seem sensible that the Lord’s preparing hand is upon them. How then do we desire that these may persevere in the path of dedication : yea, that in their love and service, they may go on “ from strength to strength ,” (Psalm, lxxxiv. 7.) until having fulfilled their due measure of suffering, every one of them may appear with final acceptance, “ before God” in Zion. (Ibid.)

The amount of the sufferings reported this year on account of tithes, priests’ demands, and those called church-rates, and for military demands, is upwards of twelve thousand six hundred and seventy eight pounds. In our last year’s Epistle we adverted to the imprisonment of a few young men under the militia laws ; and expressed our apprehension that more cases of that kind would follow. Our belief of the attachment of many of our youth to their peaceable testimony, induced this apprehension, and it has been verified by the confinement of several more on account of the local militia, and of one for the common militia. Though these temporary sacrifices of liberty, demonstrate a disposition which endears them to our hearts ; nevertheless we cannot forget that they are yet but in the beginning of their course of devotedness ; and, as is the case in various ways with many others of our precious youth, are now only girding on “ the harness.” If, dear youth, you are allowed to receive a peaceful reward for your early submission to duty, gratitude prompts you still to keep your eye to your holy guide, for further manifestations of his will, and for further proofs of his protecting care. And know assuredly, that if your days are prolonged to a period at present remote, and you are preserved in the fear of the Lord, these, and all your morning acts of humble attachment to his cause, will be sweet in your remembrance.

We have received at this time Epistles from all the North American Yearly Meetings : in which, besides the general vigilance over the welfare of the Society, we find a continuance of attention to the same objects of more general concern, which we mentioned last year : namely, the state of the black people still held as slaves, and the measures employed for civilizing the Indian natives.

The epistle from Ireland has been particularly grateful to us, and we have not failed to testify our unity with Friends in that nation by a few affectionate words of reply. Living as we do under the same government, and above all, professing the same holy

and uniting principle, we are inclined at this time to commend our Friends of the sister nation, to the continued cordial remembrance of their brethren on this side the channel.

Now, dear Friends, we would mention one subject which at this time has been under our notice ; a caution to all, to use moderation in their manner of living ; and in this way to seek relief from the increasing expense of the times in which we live, rather than by engaging in more extensive, and often hazardous schemes in trade. By these latter means, the mind becomes encumbered and unfitted for religious service, yea, often for religious thought, and for breathing daily after the spiritual riches, which are to be enjoyed in close communion with God. And let us beseech you to consider, how distant from the state which endeavours to stand resigned to give up all, if required, is that which indulges itself in ease to the full extent of its power ; or is endeavouring by multiplied adventures in trade, to acquire that power, which it covets for the purpose of worldly enjoyment. We believe however, and we are glad in believing, that there are numbers who act upon sounder principles than these ; who knowing, as saith the apostle, that “the fashion of this world passeth away,” are really desirous of using “this world as not abusing it.” (1 Cor. vii. 31.) These, we would encourage to hold on in the way cast up before them, trusting in the Lord, who hath declared that all things necessary will be given to those who seek first his kingdom. Thus trusting, and endeavouring to apply to him in secret supplication, in the difficulties that must in a state of probation be the lot of all, we may humbly hope that, in our several proportions, we shall “grow in the truth” individually ; and that, coming up in our allotments in the church militant, our various meetings will also, whether more or less as to number, experience among them a “growth in the truth.”

But, dear Friends, there is one attainment which, at this time, we are earnest to remind you of ; an attainment without which, no other gift can be permanent, and certain. We want to press on you the never ceasing duty of humility and lowliness of mind. Even our blessed Lord declared himself to be “meek and lowly in heart ;” and can any one, expecting salvation by him, be exempt from the need of possessing the same holy temper ? However great the talents with which he may have endowed us by nature, or however he may replenish our souls with the more excellent gifts of his Holy Spirit, still we have nothing which we have not received ; and we can have no sound reason for setting at nought the least of our brethren—for whom, let us remember, equally as for us, Christ died. Let us then, dear Friends, be willing to examine ourselves and know whether we are indeed hum-

ble followers of a lowly-minded, though omnipotent Saviour. If we feel a deficiency of humility, let us pray for an increase, and for assistance to check the springings up of its dreadful opposite, pride; and if we are not without some ground of hope that we are endowed, in good degree, with an humble heart, we shall certainly be encouraged still to supplicate for its continuance. Finally, dear Friends, whether, with the beloved disciple, we address you as fathers, or as young men; whether without regard of sex or station, our love in Christ now salutes the aged or the rising generation; remember, that it is "the meek" whom the Lord will "teach his way:" (Psalm, xxv. 9:) and thus taught and receiving with unreserving heart, the holy doctrine, "Grace and peace" will be multiplied, "from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 1. 7.)

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOHN WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CXXXIV—1811.

Dear Friends,

Renewedly deliberating on the subject of addressing you, with some account of the exercises, and engagements of mind, which have occupied us at this season, we have again felt encouragement to believe that we may thus contribute, through the blessing which is permitted to crown the humble endeavour of the disciple, to build you up "on your most holy faith" (Jude, 20,) in Christ Jesus our Lord. Receive then our cordial salutation in Him, the "living stone," the "chief corner stone, elect, precious;" and come to him that ye may be "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood." (1 Peter, ii. 4, 5, 6.) These are indeed sacred expressions, not lightly to be adopted! and the state to which they point is a high attainment, not to be reached by human contrivance and skill; but, remember, it is the glory of the gospel dispensation, that by it "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain;" (Isaiah, xl. 4;) yea, even the blind shall be led "by a way that they knew not," and darkness shall be made "light before them." "These things," saith the Lord, "will I do unto them, and not forsake them." (Isaiah, xlii. 16.)

One principal engagement of mind, which has been manifested in this Meeting, has been for our youth: and as the influences of heavenly love are successively visiting them, as they rise from childhood; so the care of the living members of the church is successively attracted, to attempt their preservation from the dangers incident to their state, and to encourage them to persevere in their attachment to their holy and heart-tendering visitant. Thus, dear young people, though we may seem to repeat former advice, our theme, like the successive touches of good which from time to time are melting your hearts, is never obsolete. It is a signal favour, that, in various places, there are continually fresh proofs of the prevalence of the love of Christ, operating on the mind, and producing its genuine and blessed effect of conformity to his likeness. Humility it is true, and self-denial must form a part of this likeness; but so doth also, the real and fruitful love of God, and of our neighbour: and "if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also, in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. vi. 5.) Bend, therefore, we beseech you, early—bend in good earnest and cheerfully, under the forming hand of the Lord. "The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom," (Psalm, cxi. 10,) yea, the foundation of true knowledge. There is danger in seeking knowledge independently of this, for so, as saith the apostle, "knowledge puffeth up." (1 Cor. viii. 1.) But this true knowledge is life eternal. "This," said our blessed Lord, "is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John, xvii. 3.) O, the favour, the honour, and the eternally blessed effect, of being taught of the Lord!

Nor have our good desires at this time been confined to the youth only. We are disposed to write also to you, who have passed the meridian of life. You have travelled a long course through the dangers and vicissitudes of time; and it will be well for you to reflect and know, how far you have kept yourselves "unspotted from the world." (James, i. 27.) Some of you, also, have been engaged in a long course of profession; and to some of you we trust it may be said, "Ye have known Him that is from the beginning." (1 John, ii. 13.) We beseech you to pause and to ponder the path of your feet. (Prov. iv. 26.) Is your salvation nearer than when you believed? (Rom. xiii. 11.) Is your present state answerable to the love with which you were visited, and attracted in the morning of your day? and is your love now equal to the love of your espousals? (Jer. ii. 2.) Fruits of increasing love to God are manifested in a variety of ways; and probably not in any one more clearly, or acceptably to him, than by

tokens of regard for the plants of his hand, the visited youth of his church. It is remarkable, that when our Lord thrice put the question to his zealous disciple Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" the only consequent injunction was, "Feed my lambs—feed my sheep." (John, xxi. 15—17.) There are various ways too, in which this may be effected: by precept, by sympathy, by assistance in their spiritual difficulties; but above all, by steady, uniform, circumspect example. And this, dear Friends, as you know, cannot be afforded to them, unless you experience fresh supplies of spiritual strength to persevere yourselves in dedication, faithfulness, and the fear of the Lord. How fruitful of advantage, then, is an observance of the comprehensive command of Christ, "I say unto all, Watch!" (Mark, xiii. 37.) Thus, young and old may be helps to each other: for, as "he that watereth, shall be watered also himself," (Prov. xi. 25,) the disciple who, by the benefit of holy example, and sound precept, contributes to forward others in the path of righteousness and peace, will receive an increase of ability himself to hold on his way; and the faithful members of the gathered church will become each other's joy in the Lord.

We have received at this Yearly Meeting, an acceptable epistle from Ireland, and from each of the North American Yearly Meetings. The latter continue steadily occupied in endeavouring not only to build up our own society in christian practice, but to diffuse the benefits of their christian charity beyond our limits. Two of them, namely, those of Maryland, and Carolina, have lately again become advocates with their respective legislatures, for their oppressed brethren of the African race; and, though yet in vain, not with discouragement to further intercession: and three of them, those of New-York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, are still attentive to the benevolent object of attempting to civilize their Indian neighbours.

The sufferings reported this year amount in all to about twelve thousand seven hundred pounds. Ecclesiastical demands form the bulk, and military ones a considerable part; and a few Friends have been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the militia.

Now Friends, as in our religious refusal to pay tithes, and to take our part with others in military service, our object is to bear testimony to the freedom of gospel ministry, and to the supremacy of Christ, as a teacher in the heart; and also to his reign of peace in the "kingdoms of this world;" (Rev. xi. 15.) we desire that in all your conduct among men, you may walk worthy of the high profession which you make: in which truly christian endeavour you will continually feel the need of his inward support.

Many are the duties incumbent on the followers of Christ, and all require the support of his presence for their due performance. "Without me," (they are his own words,) "ye can do nothing." (John, xv. 5.) We feel inclined at this time, ere we close the present salutation of our love, to remind you of that indispensable duty, the acknowledgment of our dependence on his power, by duly assembling at the seasons appointed for waiting on, and worshipping God. Deficiencies, indeed, in this respect do not in the general appear to increase; and we are aware that we often renew our tender exhortation on this subject. Once more, dear Friends, let the exhortation go forth. Consider the motives of deficiency, such of you as may be conscious of it. If, as the Apostle has declared the presenting of "your bodies be a reasonable service," (Rom. xii. 1,) we beseech you to examine into the cause that it is too often intermitted. Is it not, that, in a greater or less degree you may still be "conformed to this world?" (Rom. xii. 2.) But recollect; this conformity will still prevent the christian professor from being transformed by the renewing of the mind; and from proving (as who, at the solemn approaching close, will not rejoice to have proved?) "what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.)

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOHN WILKINSON.

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXXV—1812.

Dear Friends,

Being permitted to meet at the present time, to investigate the state of our religious society, and participating together in that love which, we believe, takes its origin in the boundless mercy of God through Christ our holy Redeemer, through Him who died for us,

and who ever liveth to make intercession for us ; we have found this love to extend to you our brethren. We have considered your situation, whether in your larger or smaller meetings ; and as we have again been impressed with the belief, that in renewing the written salutation of our love, we shall be found in the way of our duty ; we have desired to be directed to impart to you such information and counsel, as may tend to your increase in the fear of the Lord, and in the consolations of his presence.

Seeing therefore, the infinite value of love, that indispensable qualification of a true disciple, we are desirous of pressing it on every individual, to examine impartially how far he feels it to flourish in his own mind, and to influence all his actions, thus inducing others to follow him, as he is endeavouring to follow Christ. And we believe that nothing will be so favourable to the preservation of this holy disposition, as humility of heart, a temper in which we constantly see ourselves unworthy of the least of the Lord's mercies, and dependent only on his compassion for our final acceptance. Seeing also that no awakened mind can be without a view to a better and an enduring state, and that no one knows how soon he may be called to put off mutability : let us bear in perpetual recollection that, in the state to which we aspire, there is nothing but eternal love, joy, and adoration, in the presence of Him, through whose love we were first awakened.

In contemplating this copious subject, though we are not apprehensive of more symptoms of deficiency than in former years, we feel disposed afresh to encourage Friends to be prompt in undertaking, and prudent in executing, the blessed office of peace-maker. And we believe the patient endeavours of faithful Friends, will be generally crowned with success, in proportion as their own minds are seeking to Jesus, for assistance in performing an office on which he has pronounced his blessing ; and endeavouring to lead the minds of any contending persons, to a sense of the absolute necessity for all true disciples to live in peace one with another, and to forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven them. (Ephes. iv. 32.)

Before we quit the subject of christian love, let us remind you that no limit of name can bound its influence. In this season of almost unprecedented pressure on some of the poorer classes of our countrymen, we deem it particularly desirable, that our dear Friends every where should not be backward in examining into their distresses ; but liberal in contributing a due portion of relief. Many are allowed to have temporal possessions sufficient to do this with comparative ease. Let these therefore, remember that they are but stewards, and let them seek to be good and faithful stewards. And it is probable that others, not equally abound-

ing in the good things of this life, may find that in using moderation in their own expenditure, they may have wherewith to supply the wants of others, and to make the heart of the poor man sing for joy. O, the blessing of clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry ! who would not desire to be entitled to a share of it ?

Moderation in personal and domestic expense, every way becomes the followers of a lowly-hearted Saviour. We are therefore engaged to press it upon our young Friends, just setting out in life, to beware of needless expense in the furniture of their houses, and in their general domestic habits. Even those who think their property may entitle them to abundance or to elegance, by indulging in costly habits are setting but an ill example to those of more contracted means ; and as we are but too apt to copy that which coincides with our natural disposition, our want of circumspection may prove an incitement to extravagance in others, and prompt them to use exertions for supporting an appearance, which may divert them from the true business of life—the daily study to be approved in the sight of God.

And, dear youth in general, especially you whose period of life may not be so advanced as that of those whom we have just addressed, even you who have left, or are about to leave, the protection of a parent, and to enter into the busy scenes of life ; some of you, probably, in populous towns, far different from the retirement of your paternal abodes ; we beseech you to guard against the new temptations which may now assail you. Oppose the first incitement to any liberty inconsistent with your principles, and be willing to seek the society of experienced Friends in the places where you may be situated, and to receive their admonition with meekness and attention. Never forget that the season of early youth is a season of peculiar danger ; and if you grow up under this sense, you will from time to time be led to cry for preservation to Him, who has said, (and his words are Amen, for ever,) “ Him, that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” (John, vi. 37.)

The usual accounts of sufferings brought in this year, chiefly for tithes, and those called church-rates, and for military demands, amount to thirteen thousand six hundred and forty-five pounds. Five young men have been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the local militia. Besides these and other accounts which we have received from our several Quarterly Meetings, we have an epistle from Ireland, and one from each of the Yearly Meetings on the American continent. The Yearly Meetings of our American brethren seem vigilant in their attention to the support of our testimonies, and to purposes of general benevolence. The due education of our youth still forms a part of the concern of the Yearly Meeting of Pennsylvania ; which has also, together with those of

Maryland and New-York, continued to care for the native inhabitants of the wilderness ; and those of Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland testify, in their epistles their unremitting concern for the state of the enslaved Africans in their land. Although in our country, as well as in theirs, the infamous traffic with Africa in slaves has been abolished by law, we desire Friends not to forget that slavery still exists within the British empire, and to suffer their sympathy still to flow towards its oppressed victims.

Thus, dear Friends, we trust we may say that, both abroad and at home, the Lord is influencing his servants to remain on the watch. Though the subject of our concern may be somewhat various, it is still pleasant to reflect that all are aiming at the same object, and all looking to the same Lord for his gracious assistance. Having the same faith, and being baptised with the same baptism, (even those plunges into exercise and conflict which wash us from confidence in our own exertions,) how can it be otherwise than that we should rely, as we have just hinted, on the same Lord? May this unity of travail encourage us all to abide steadfast in our allegiance to him, that in due season we may reap the unfading reward of his holy peace.

Having touched on some of the subjects, which have warmed our hearts in desire that we may be built up a spiritual house, we entreat you to consider that it is by means of individual exertions, under the direction of the omnipotent Master-builder, that the work is to be effected to his praise. Be vigilant therefore, we beseech you; be constant, when cases require it, in faithful and tender admonition. Neglect in this point gives countenance to defects and increases them, whilst the faithful admonisher may hope to partake of the reward of those who "turn many to righteousness;" who, saith the prophet, shine "as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.)

Now, dear Friends, in conclusion, let us observe, that love, Christian love, is the parent of every virtue: it restrains our immoderate gratification of personal indulgence: it expands our hearts to every class of society, and to every modification of the human species: it makes us prompt to lend a hand of help to such as may stray from the path of safety; it leads to universal benevolence: and as it is the origin of every good work, so through the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, it will be the reward of a life passed in his service, in its native region, the realm of unmixed love, with him for ever. Amen.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOHN WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXXVI—1813.

Dear Friends,

We have had cause, at this time, to acknowledge the condescension of our Heavenly Father, who is still pleased to own with his presence these our annual assemblies. Under this influence, our hearts have been united ; and we have been animated to crave the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to serve him with faithfulness, and to uphold with christian simplicity, our various religious testimonies. And we believe, that the constraining love of the gospel calls upon us to salute our dear brethren, with the invitation, "O ! taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm, xxxiv. 8.)

In the course of the usual proceedings of this Meeting, we have received from the several Quarterly and other Meetings of which it is constituted, an account of the state of our religious Society. Whilst we lament that many amongst us are still too much engrossed with the fading enjoyments of this life, and are refusing to follow our holy pattern, in the path of self-denial, we wish they may not be deprived of that encouragement to turn into the right way, which often results from the faithful admonitions of those who have known the benefits of greater circumspection. Though from a sense of their own weakness, some of the rightly concerned among us may be ready to shrink from the performance of this duty, we would remind them, that by thus evincing their love to their Friends, they will receive additional strength themselves, and that such acts of dedication will contribute to their own advancement in the christian course.

We desire, dear Friends, that such of you as often meet in small companies for the solemn purpose of worship, may not relax your diligence. Your situation will at times appear discouraging : but although you may be seldom assisted by the company and travail of your brethren, never forget that you are under the continued notice of the Lord ; and that his tender regard extends to all those who wait upon him in reverence and humility. Many who have been alike circumstanced, can acknowledge that they have known their strength renewed, and their confidence in divine support increased, by a due attendance of their meetings for religious worship. Your situation, though trying to yourselves, is important. If with faithfulness and integrity you perform your christian duties, your example will prevail with others who have been too negligent of the concerns of a future life ; and by your consistent conduct, the truth which we profess will be exalted—the name of the Lord glorified.

Our minds have been affected, at this time, by the recent decease of many with whom we have been often associated in religious labour, and whose memory is precious. We feel the loss of these; yet we can with thankfulness acknowledge, we have been comforted in reflecting, that the Almighty Power which was their support, and which has preserved us since we were first gathered to be a people, is unchangeably the same. We sympathize also with those who are in the decline of life, in whose hearts such afflictive deprivations may, in their solicitude for the welfare of the church, excite many discouraging feelings. To you, our elder brethren and sisters, we offer the salutation of our cordial love. We desire that you may partake of our comfort, in observing the conduct of many, who are now in the vigour of health and strength, and who, in various ways, are giving proofs of their attachment to that cause, the prosperity of which has been your greatest joy. We doubt not that your endeavours to stand approved in the sight of God, have met his gracious acceptance; and that your example, and labours in the Lord's service, have animated many of these younger brethren to follow you, as you have been endeavouring to follow Christ. Let us likewise entreat you, dear Friends, who are of less religious experience, but who have entered upon the active scenes of life, not to retard your christian progress, by any unwillingness to make an entire surrender of your hearts to the disposal of infinite wisdom. The Lord is a rich rewarder of all his faithful followers; and happy will it be for you, should you be permitted to see many days, to reflect, at the close of life, that you have been devoted to the promotion of his cause.

The amount of sufferings brought in this year, is upwards of fifteen thousand four hundred and seventy pounds; a small proportion of this sum has been taken for military purposes; but the greater part was incurred in the support of our ancient christian testimony against tithes and other demands of an ecclesiastical nature.

We have received an Epistle from our Friends in Ireland, and one from each of the Yearly Meetings on the continent of America, except that of Carolina. In consequence of large emigrations from other parts of the United States, five Quarterly Meetings of Friends resident on the western side of the Alleghany mountains, have been detached from the Yearly Meeting of Maryland, and formed into a separate one. Under the influence of that love by which we are united as brethren, we have addressed an Epistle to those who are intending to meet on that important occasion, in the eighth month next, in the state of Ohio. From the Epistles and other communications from America, we find that our Friends, besides being attentive to the concerns of our own Society, are still

pursuing their engagements for the welfare of the African and Indian race. But the war, in which that country and this are now sorrowfully involved, has presented great obstacles to their efforts towards civilizing the Indians; and is likely, for a time, to suspend in some parts their successful exertions in that important and interesting cause.

When we consider the continuance and the extension of war, we cannot but deeply feel, on account of the desolations and numerous evils which are its inseparable attendants: and we earnestly entreat all our members, so to abide within the limitations of truth, as in no degree to violate our christian testimony in this respect for the sake of gain. Let us keep out of even the spirit of contest; and strive for the attainment of a dependance on Him, whose kingdom is not of this world.

Amongst the numerous benevolent undertakings which now interest the minds of our countrymen, we contemplate with much satisfaction, the general circulation of the Holy Scriptures. Our sense of that inestimable treasure has been frequently acknowledged; and we feel ourselves engaged to call the attention of such of our members as may be employed in this salutary work, to the supreme importance of giving heed to that Divine word, to which the Scriptures bear testimony. This word is Christ; the "Bread of Life," (John, vi. 48.) and "the Light of men;" that "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (Ibid. i. 4, 9.) If we are earnest to obey the teachings of this unerring guide, we shall be led to cry to the Lord, that he would preserve us from self-exaltation, from attributing to ourselves that honour which is due to Him alone. We shall be on our guard lest we should mistake our proper sphere of usefulness, or suffer any pursuit, however laudable in itself, to divert us from our true allotment of labour in the church. This watchfulness unto prayer can alone ensure our growth in religious experience, and our establishment in every good word and work.

"Finally, brethren, farewell! Be perfect," (2 Cor. xiii. 11.) Let this attainment be the principal object in view: then will you be of good comfort, and of one mind; you will live in peace one with another, and "the God of love and peace" will be with you.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by
JOHN WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXXXVII—1814.

Dear Friends,

Our hearts have been afresh warmed with the love of the Gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord, and we feel encouraged therein to testify our unabated solicitude, for the preservation and prosperity of the members of our religious Society. We desire that the goodness and mercy of Him, from whom we derive every blessing, may excite you to fear, to love, and to serve him with fervency of soul, and to pray that under the influence of the Spirit of the Son of his love, you may in all things, be enabled to glorify his holy name.

Deeply impressed with gratitude to Almighty God, that the sword is again stayed in this quarter of the globe, and that the spirit of contention which has so long prevailed, has been succeeded by marks of christian forbearance and charity, we desire to express our thankfulness for the prospect of peace. The judgments of the Lord have indeed been in the earth; and many have learned righteousness. May the number of these increase; may the peaceable spirit of the Gospel, the surest pledge of permanent tranquillity, spread and prevail! We of this island have cause to be doubly thankful: we have been preserved from witnessing the effusion of blood, and the ravages of war, which have spread over the greatest part of Europe; and we are now permitted, in common with nations, to rejoice thus far in their cessation.

In what way, therefore, beloved Friends, shall we evince our sense of these unmerited favours? It is well known that we regard it as a christian testimony, to refrain from uniting in those public demonstrations of joy, which often prevail on such occasions. We are convinced that frequently they lead to practices, inconsistent with that meek and quiet spirit which should clothe the disciple of Jesus, and are an inlet to excesses which estrange the mind from God. It is not in this way that we should manifest our grateful feelings; but by endeavouring, through the influence of redeeming love and power, to live more and more in the spirit of the Gospel, and thus to become examples of genuine christian conduct.

Public worship is a duty which we owe to our great Creator. And even in contemplating the recent events to which we have already alluded, we feel engaged to invite you to consider them as an additional incentive to diligence in this respect. Great indeed are the benefits of a regular attendance of our religious meetings; and of waiting upon God in spirit and in truth, when thus assembled,

The mind being then abstracted from temporal concerns, and fixed on the true object of worship, aspirations for help will arise; the union of a travail of spirit will be felt, and we shall be more and more sensible of the benefit of so employing a due portion of our time. If we become thus sensible, we shall be earnest that all the branches of our families may partake with us; and we shall not rest satisfied that either they or ourselves should, once only in the week, allot a few hours to this duty. Let us then, dear Friends, entreat you who may have been deficient, to lay these things to heart, and deeply to consider whether your practice is calculated to advance you in the christian course, or render you good examples to those around you. If the mind be duly turned to the Lord, in meetings for worship, the benefits which result will not be confined to the hours that may be thus occupied. We shall, even in the concerns of this life, be preserved in a degree of the same calm and watchful state of mind, and in frequent retirement be led to examine our own hearts. Thus furnished with strength from above, we may with increasing, yet humble confidence, pursue our good resolutions, and proceed with calmness and safety in the way cast up for the redeemed of the Lord to walk in. Our desires for the possessions of this world shall be limited within the bounds of christian moderation: we will prefer durable riches and righteousness.

The sufferings of our Friends in this nation and Ireland amount to upwards of sixteen thousand two hundred pounds; of this sum about eleven hundred pounds arose from military demands; and the remainder, from the support of our testimony against tithes and other ecclesiastical claims. Ten of our young men have been imprisoned for a short time on account of the local militia.

The epistolary intercourse with our friends in Ireland, and in America, has been maintained in this as in former years, and has been the means of awakening an interest in the welfare of our distant brethren. Whilst we lament that America should yet remain under the afflicting scourge from which Europe is in a great measure freed; we anticipate, with hope, the event which shall extend to that country also the blessings of peace.

We desire tenderly to remind those who have joined us upon the ground of conviction of the truth of our religious principles, that a spiritual confession calls for evident fruits of holiness. May these, therefore, regard their connexion with us, rather as an opening to fresh duties, than as the period of cessation and rest.

We have been made sensible, during this Yearly Meeting, of the continued goodness of Him who has eminently blessed our Society. Under a grateful sense of his mercies,

we renewedly invite you to a full surrender to his gracious disposal, and in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, we again salute you, and cordially bid you farewell.

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by
JOHN WILKINSON,
Clerk of the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CXXXVIII—1815.

Dear Friends,

In offering you the salutation of our love, we believe it right to acknowledge our thankfulness to the Author of all good, that we have been permitted to meet together. We have had again to rejoice in a sense of the goodness of Him who, by his presence, owned us in times past; and, though sensible of the loss of the labour and counsel of some, who have recently been removed from the probations of time, we have felt the consoling assurance that the Divine Power is both ancient and new. It is from this holy source that every enjoyment, both spiritual and temporal, flows; it is to the Lord Almighty that we are indebted for the blessing of existence, for the means of redemption, and for that lively hope of immortality which comes by Jesus Christ. To his service, then, dear Friends, in obedience to the manifestation of his power, let us offer our talents; to the glory of his great and excellent name, let us devote our strength and the residue of our days.

The state of our religious Society, as transmitted from the several bodies which constitute this Yearly Meeting, has been again brought under our view. Accounts of the sufferings of our members, chiefly for tithes and other ecclesiastical demands, and for claims of a military nature, to the amount of fifteen thousand seven hundred and twenty seven pounds, have been reported; and we are informed that ten of our young men have been imprisoned since last year, for refusing to serve in the local militia.

We are encouraged in believing, that our ancient christian testimony to the inward teaching of the Spirit of Christ, and to a free Gospel ministry, not only continues to be precious to many, but is gaining ground amongst us. The sufferings to which we are exposed, are, through the lenity of our government, far less severe than were those of our predecessors. To some, however, we believe

that these operate at times as a trial of their faith and love to the truth. We are disposed to remind such, that patience and meekness on their part will tend both to exalt the testimony in the view of others, and to promote their own advancement in the christian course.

The Epistle from our Friends in Ireland, and those from the several Meetings on the American continent, have again convinced us that we are brethren, bound together by the endearing ties of christian fellowship, desiring as fellow-disciples to follow the same Lord; and we feel, that there is in the gospel of Christ a union that is not dissolved by distance, nor affected by the jarring contentions of men.

We are engaged tenderly to caution Friends against an eager pursuit after the things of this life. We believe that many who begin the world with moderate views, meeting at first with success in trade, go on extending their commercial concerns, until they become involved therein to a degree prohibited by the precepts of Christ, and incompatible with their own safety. Thus situated, some may be tempted to adopt a line of conduct, dishonourable in itself, and injurious to others. On this subject, we think it right to repeat some advice given by the Yearly Meeting in its printed Epistle of 1771:—We “warn all against a most pernicious practice, too much prevailing amongst the trading part of mankind, which hath often issued in the utter ruin of those concerned therein, namely, that of raising and circulating a fictitious kind of paper credit, with endorsements and acceptances, to give it an appearance of value without an intrinsic reality: a practice highly unbecoming that uprightness which ought to appear in every member of our religious Society, and of which therefore we think it our incumbent duty to declare our disapprobation, (and disunity therewith,) as absolutely inconsistent with that truth we make profession of.”—Epistle, 1771.

That contentment which characterized the pious christian, is a treasure which we covet for all our members; and we especially desire that those who are setting out in life may so circumscribe their expectations, and limit their domestic establishments, as not to bring upon themselves expenses which could only be supported by an imprudent extension of their trade. Care in this respect will enable them to allot more of their time to the service of their fellow-men, and to the promotion of the Lord's cause. We believe that, were parents to instil into the minds of their children principles of moderation and economy, suited to their future expectations, it would, under the Divine blessing, not only conduce to their preservation, but promote their safety and comfort in life. We are far from wishing to discourage honest industry; and further

still from countenancing in any degree a spirit of avarice. We are not insensible, that the situation of many of our members is such as renders necessary to them a diligent attention to the concerns of this life. Christian simplicity and self-denial we would, however, earnestly recommend; these attained, the object which, in this respect, we have at heart for all our dear Friends, will be accomplished.

Amongst other deficiencies reported to us at this time, we have been pained in observing, that many appear to be still satisfied with attending meeting for Divine worship but once in the week. We lament in believing that, where indifference to this primary religious duty prevails in any, the spirit of the world hath obtained the ascendancy in their minds; for these we have often at former times expressed our concern, and now again entreat them to consider the privations of good to which they subject themselves, and those over whom their example prevails, in omitting this most reasonable service. The habit of constant attendance on these occasions, forms an important branch of the religious education of our youth; we are therefore desirous of impressing on the minds of those who are entrusted, and who themselves may be diligent, to beware how they deprive their children of such opportunities on the week-day, even for the sake of their attendance at school.

It has afforded us much satisfaction to believe, that the christian practice of daily reading in families a portion of Holy Scripture, with a subsequent pause for retirement and reflection, is increasing amongst us. We conceive that it is both the duty and the interest of those who believe in the doctrines of the gospel, and who possess the invaluable treasure of the Sacred Records, frequently to recur to them for instruction and consolation. We are desirous that this wholesome domestic regulation may be adopted every where. Heads of families, who have themselves experienced the benefit of religious instruction, will do well to consider whether, in this respect, they have not a duty to discharge to their servants and others of their household. Parents looking sincerely for help to Him of whom these Scriptures testify, may not unfrequently, on such occasions, feel themselves enabled and engaged to open to the minds of their interesting charge, the great truths of christian duty and christian redemption.

In considering this subject, our younger Friends have been brought to our remembrance with warm and tender solicitude. We hope that many of you, dear youth, are no strangers to this practice, and to some we trust it has already been blessed. Hesitate not, (we beseech all of this class,) to allot a portion of each day to read and meditate upon the Sacred Volume in private:

steadily direct your minds to Him who alone can open and apply the Scriptures to our spiritual benefit. In these seasons of retirement, seek for ability to enter into a close examination of the state of your own hearts ; and as you may be enabled, secretly pray to the Almighty for preservation from the temptations with which you are encompassed. Your advancement in a life of humility, dedication, and dependence upon Divine aid, is a subject of our most tender concern. That you might adorn our holy profession, by walking watchfully before the Lord, and upholding our various testimonies, was the care of some of our dear Friends, of whose decease we have been at this time informed. They were concerned in early life to evince their love to the truth ; they served the Lord in uprightness, and fear in their generation, and, in their closing moments, were permitted to feel an humble trust that, through the mediation of our Redeemer, they should become heirs of a kingdom that shall never have an end. Let their example encourage you to offer all your natural powers, and every intellectual attainment, to the service of the same Lord, and patiently to persevere in a course of unremitting obedience to the Divine will.

Now, dear Friends, of every age and of every class, we bid you affectionately farewell in the Lord Jesus. Let us ever bear in mind, whether we attempt, under the influence of christian love to maintain our testimonies to the spiritual and peaceable kingdom of the Lamb ; whether we attempt to promote the present and future welfare of our fellow-members and fellow-men ;—let us ever remember that if we obey the divine commandments, we shall do all to the glory of God ; we shall always acknowledge, that it is of his mercy, if we ever become partakers of the unspeakable privilege of the true disciples of Him who “died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.” (2 Cor. v. 15.)

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

WILLIAM DILLWORTH CREWDSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CXXXIX—1816.

Dear Friends,

We esteem it a favour which calls for our grateful acknowledgments, that we have been afresh made sensible on this occasion, of our Heavenly Father's love, and have felt that it reaches to all our dear Friends, wherever they are situated. Our minds have been humbled in gratitude to Him, who by his Divine power raised us up to be a people, who has from one generation to another blessed our religious society, and who is still to be felt at times in great mercy to preside amongst us. We have earnestly desired that these impressions may be an additional motive for us to consider, how far we are seeking to be established on Jesus Christ, the Rock of ages, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." (Heb. xiii. 8.) To this foundation of our predecessors, we desire to direct your most serious attention. Let it, dear Friends, be our daily concern to seek for his Divine guidance and support. Great will be the advantages which we shall thence derive. The bitterness of our conflicts will be sweetened by the remembrance, that He unto whom we are seeking, and who is "not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," (Heb. iv. 15,) is "able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him." (Ibid. vii. 25.) A sense of victory over our evil affections, through his power and mediation, will be a sufficient consolation. It will, if the watch be maintained, strengthen us to proceed in the way of allotted duty; and though new trials and temptations may await us, and we may continue sensible of the dangers with which we are surrounded, the blessing of true christian experience, the result of patient perseverance in well-doing, will be ours. Thus, from what we have known and what we have felt, we shall be constrained to acknowledge, that there is no joy like unto the joy of God's salvation.

We observe with pleasure the increasing desire manifested by Friends to obtain a guarded and useful education for their children. The reports on the schools under the notice of this meeting, indicate the religious care and good order prevailing in them, and have yielded us great satisfaction. The improvement of the understanding, and the communication of that knowledge by which it may be more extensively prepared for the service of Him to whom we must all render our account, are duties not to be neglected. We desire however to impress upon all, whether parents, or those to whom they trust their tender offspring, the su-

preme importance of inculcating the first of duties, the love and fear of God.

A watchful parent will at no time be more alive to the welfare of his children, than when they are passing from the age to which we have just adverted, to the succeeding stage of life. The situations in which they are then placed, and the companions with whom they associate, may have a decided influence on their future character. We would therefore, encourage both parents and masters not to relax at this critical period, either in care or counsel, or in proper restraint, tempered with kindness. Here we would advert to the importance of good example, and to the great blessing which will attend the labours of those whom we are now addressing, as they seek to become preachers of righteousness, in life and conduct to those around them. How inviting, how instructive, it is, to behold such as by the purity of their lives, by the meekness of their spirits, and by the benevolence of their characters are adorning their profession! This is a duty which is enjoined by the highest authority ; (Mat. v. 16 ;) and we earnestly press upon all to consider whether their moderation, their self-denial, their habits of life, are such as become the christian religion.

Our solicitude has at this time been awakened for our young men employed as travellers in business. The exposure of these to the temptations to which they are often unavoidably subjected, has tended to draw aside some from that simplicity, that purity of heart and thought, that strict morality, which our christian principles require. We would submit to the serious consideration of their parents and employers, the extreme danger of sending forth into such service any young person whose religious principles are not fixed, nor their habits formed ; and we would encourage Friends in different places where those in this line of employment may travel, to continue and extend that kind and hospitable notice which has been already manifested. The situation of some of our young Friends in other occupations, may deprive them of the advantage of virtuous and instructive associates ; these also we hope will not be overlooked by those to whom they are known.

We lament that reproach should have been brought on our society by the failure of any of our members in discharging their just debts. We consider it to be the duty of all, but especially of every person under pecuniary difficulties, to inspect narrowly into the state of their affairs ; and this we conceive might often prevent such an issue. Let all Friends be careful to live within their income, retrenching if necessary their expenses ; and we desire that it may be their uniform endeavour to conduct their business

in such a way as may subject them to the least risk or danger. For those who, possessing integrity, yet from the pressure of the times, are, with honest, and upright intentions, struggling under many difficulties, we feel near sympathy. Let these be encouraged: they will not fail, we trust, if they seek it, to obtain the kind advice of their Friends. Let it be their earnest concern, under these trials, to hold fast their confidence in our all-wise and gracious Helper; as likewise their love to their brethren. This love we believe is peculiarly endangered, whenever the mind is disturbed by the perplexing cares arising from embarrassed circumstances.

The amount of sufferings reported this year, occasioned by claims for tithes and other demands of an ecclesiastical nature, with a few for military purposes, is upwards of fifteen thousand pounds. Our brethren of all the Yearly Meetings on the American continent have again given proofs of their love by written communications. The interesting work of Indian civilization still occupies their attention. In some of the tribes, the improvements which, notwithstanding the late commotions, have been gradually going forward, are truly encouraging. In others, those who are concerned in this good work, have probably already renewed their exertions, where the ravages of war had desolated many of the settlements. The persevering labours of Friends in Virginia and some other parts, to procure the freedom of many negroes illegally as well as unjustly held in slavery, have, in several instances, been crowned with success; and it is very gratifying to observe that the rights of this injured people are still dear to our American brethren. We hope that, in this country, Friends will continue to feel a deep interest in the welfare of the African race, and not dismiss the subject from their thoughts, until such wise and prudent measures may be adopted, as shall promote and finally secure universal emancipation.

So excellent is christian love in its nature and effects, that it is deeply painful when we hear of any difference existing amongst us. How can those who are at variance one with another, unite acceptably in the performance of worship to Him who is emphatically styled Love? It is an awful consideration, that that disposition which separates man from man, does at the time estrange him, and will, if it continue, eventually separate him, from his Creator. We therefore earnestly recommend to Friends, to watch the first appearances of discord: patiently and kindly to endeavour to assist those who may be thus affected, or who are in danger of becoming hardened towards their brethren. Christian charity, and tenderness for the infirmities of our Friends, are bonds in religious society. These do not preclude that kind and tender admonition, that

exercise of our discipline in the spirit of the Gospel, which we have from time to time, been engaged to recommend. Although we are not a numerous society, yet if we are preserved in love, and dwell under the government of Christ, we may hope to fulfil the designs of Divine Providence in having gathered and established us as a separate religious body: we may show forth the excellence of the Christian religion by the spirituality of our worship, and by the purity of our lives.

Dear Friends, we desire, in conclusion, reverently to acknowledge that this Yearly Meeting has been a time of the renewal of our strength, and of the increase of our confidence in the goodness of Israel's shepherd. We cordially bid you farewell. May "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and in the patient waiting for Christ." (2 Thes. iii. 5.)

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by
WILLIAM DILLWORTH CREWDSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXL—1817.

Dear Friends,

The love of our heavenly Father has prevailed in this our annual assembly. It has united us in the fellowship of the gospel, and has extended to our dear absent brethren. Under this influence, our confidence has been renewed, that the foundation upon which the righteous in all ages have built their faith and their hope, is for ever immutable. Notwithstanding our own infirmities, and the discouragements which surround us, we have felt the consoling persuasion that the Lord is still mindful of us. He who hath blessed us and our forefathers with many tokens of his Divine regard, is yet waiting to show himself gracious; and, by the Spirit of his Son, is calling us to purity of heart, and to holiness in all manner of conversation. May we then consider the sacred duties devolve upon us as Christians; the awful responsibility we are under as to a right use of all those gifts and talents, with which we have been entrusted; and the necessity of becoming a more spiritually minded people.

In turning our attention to the state of the Society as it has been now laid before us, the proper employment of the first day of the week, the day more particularly set apart for public worship, is a subject that has claimed our serious attention. It is no small privilege to be living in a country where much regard is paid to this duty, and it highly becomes us to be careful that our example in this respect be consistent with the profession we make to the world. We desire that heads of families, and our younger Friends also, may closely examine, whether they are sufficiently solicitous to improve that portion of this day which is not allotted to the great duty of meeting with their friends for the purpose of Divine worship. To those who are awakened to a due sense of the eternal interests of the soul—and oh! that this were the case with all—we believe that these intervals have often proved times of much religious benefit. Many have derived great increase of strength both at these and other times, from retiring to wait upon the Lord; from reading the Holy Scriptures with minds turned to their Divine Author, in desire that he would bless them to their comfort and edification; and from perusing the pious lives and experiences of those who have gone before them. But we avoid prescribing any precise line of conduct, believing that if the attention be sincerely turned unto the Heavenly Shepherd, his preserving help and guidance will not be withheld.

Those of the class whom we have just been addressing may sometimes feel that their faith is low, when about to attend their meetings in the course of the week, it may be, under great outward difficulties. These sacrifices of time, and opportunities of withdrawing from worldly cares, have been blessed to many: they have proved, in seasons of deep trial and discouragement, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The waiting, dependant mind has thus been enabled to put on strength to persevere in the Christian course; and under the pressure of many troubles and perplexities, to experience an increase of faith in the merciful and omnipotent care of our great Creator. Be encouraged then, dear Friends, not to neglect your meetings, however small; but to believe that, by a diligent attendance of them, and a right engagement of mind therein, you will be strengthened to fill up your stations as faithful and devoted Christians.

In a well-ordered family, short opportunities of religious retirement frequently occur, in which the mind may be turned in secret aspiration to the Author of all our blessings; and which have often proved times of more than transient benefit. It is our present concern, that no exception to this practice may be found amongst us; whether it take place on the reading of a portion of the sacred volume, or when we are assembled to partake of the provisions with

which we are supplied for the sustenance of the body. On these latter occasions, may the hearts of our young Friends also, be turned in gratitude to God, who thus liberally provides for them. May the experience of us all be such, that we can adopt the words of the psalmist, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray." (Ps. lv. 17.)

In our last year's Epistle, we had to remark the failure of some of our members in paying their just debts. We have been again deeply pained on finding that some disgraceful cases of this kind have since occurred. Whilst we lament the condition of such as have thus wounded their own peace, and brought condemnation on themselves, we also feel very tenderly both for the near relatives of these, and for their creditors who have suffered through them. In adverting to these cases, it is our solicitude that the misconduct of those to whom we allude may be a caution to others. At all times, but more particularly in the present depressed state of trade and commerce, it will be very useful for Friends frequently to inspect into the state of their own property, to keep their concerns within proper bounds, and so to confine their wants within the limits of Christian contentment, that should any unforeseen reverses be experienced, they may look back with feelings of conscious integrity. And we would especially recommend to Friends of discrimination and sound judgment, in kindness and love, to watch over their brethren for good. Great advantages would result from early, repeated, and private advice to young tradesmen, who from temporary success and inexperience may be in danger of exceeding their capital, and of imprudently extending their business.

Our sympathy is much excited by those, who, after fair prospects, have, from a sudden depreciation of property, been subjected to many difficulties. We wish kindly to encourage such of these as have it still within their power, to a timely contraction of their domestic expenses. And we desire that their trials may be lightened, by beholding in their offspring a disposition to industry and economy, and a willingness that their expectations should not exceed those limits which become a Christian character; this we believe would ultimately tend to their greatest good. Before we quit this subject, we would remind our friends of the former advice of this Meeting, that where any have injured others in their property, the greatest frugality should be observed by themselves and their families; and although they may have a legal discharge from their creditors, both equity and our Christian profession demand, that none when they have it in their power should rest satisfied, until a just restitution be made to those who have suffered by them.

The amount of sufferings reported this year, for tithes and other ecclesiastical claims, and a few demands of a military nature, is upwards of fourteen thousand four hundred pounds. We have received Epistles from all, except one, of the Yearly Meetings on the American continent. From these, we observe with pleasure, that besides a watchful care to support the testimonies of our own Society, our brethren beyond the Atlantic are engaged in various acts of benevolence for the welfare of their fellow-men.

Dear young Friends, our hearts are warmed with love to you. We desire that it may be your frequent concern to seek for an establishment on the only sure foundation, and to wait in humble watchfulness for the teachings of the heavenly instructor. If conflicts of mind should attend you, and prove painful and humiliating in their nature, this is no cause for dismay. Those who steadily pursue the path of a true disciple, will, through the goodness of the Lord, at times be permitted indubitably to feel that they are the objects of his paternal regard. Thus they will have cause to acknowledge the great benefit of patient religious exercise. They will, from their own experience, know an increase of true faith in the power and perceptible support of the Holy Spirit. Ascribing this to the free gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, they will become firmly persuaded that the tendering power of Redeeming love, though undervalued by too many, is above all things precious. We are consoled in the belief, that the feet of many of our beloved young Friends have been turned into this path. And it is our earnest desire, that neither the fear of man, the offence of the cross, an aversion to the simplicity of the truth, nor the activity of their own wills, may interrupt their progress; but that they may, through the unfoldings of Divine counsel, come to know an establishment in that faith, which giveth the victory. (1 John, v. 4.)

And, dear Friends, you who love the Truth, and who are in the vigour of life; feeling, as you must, the many blessings of which you have been partakers, and the privilege it is to be employed in the smallest degree, in the service of the Lord, let it be your concern to offer your hearts to his disposal, and under his sacred guidance, to become devoted to the support of his cause.

May our dear elder brethren and sisters, though often depressed on various accounts, be, by continued watchfulness unto prayer, endued with capacity to trust in God. May they receive that Divine support, which will enable them acceptably to endure the remaining trials of time; and, being preserved in liveliness and meekness of spirit, be prepared to enter into rest everlasting—Farewell.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

WILLIAM DILLWORTH CREWDSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

EPISTLE CXLI—1818.

Dear Friends,

In this our annual assembly, it has again pleased our Heavenly Father to overshadow us with his love. We have been enabled to transact the important affairs which have come before us, in much harmony and condescension, and have been comforted, and permitted to rejoice in a renewed sense of Divine goodness. Under the expansive influence of these feelings, we offer you our cordial salutation, and express our earnest solicitude, that we may indeed be a spiritual house, built up in our Lord Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Intercessor—our hope of eternal glory.

We have received an epistle from our Friends in Ireland, and one from each of the Yearly meetings in America, except that of North Carolina. Our brethren in the State of Ohio, although themselves removed from the scene of slavery, have, after the example of those in Pennsylvania, thought it right to address a memorial to their general government on behalf of the African race, who in various parts of the United States are kidnapped, and involved in the miseries of lawless violence. The Epistle from New-York conveys the acceptable intelligence of an act of their Legislature which declares that slavery shall cease in that state in the year 1827.

The amount of the sufferings of our members, as reported to this meeting, in support of our testimony against tithes and other ecclesiastical claims, and including some small demands for military purposes, is upwards of sixteen thousand two hundred pounds.*

This meeting has been large; and in examining into the state of our Society, we have been afresh desirous that our various christian testimonies may be maintained in purity and consistency. One of those by which we are distinguished is, our peculiar view of the subject of public worship. Great are the benefits which result from a right performance of this indispensable service. The tendency of our practice is to direct the mind unto God; and, if it be pursued with sincerity and earnestness, our hopes will be ultimately fixed on Him, the unfailing Source of help. We

* An opinion being sometimes entertained with regard to these sufferings, that individuals are reimbursed by the Society, it is desired, if occasion should occur, that Friends would refute it; as no such practice exists.

shall then be led from an undue dependance on outward ministry, and come to experience that state in which we can "worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.) How circumspect, how reverent, and how watchful, ought we then to be in our religious meetings! But we fear that too many do not maintain a waiting, dependant state of mind in these assemblies; that they do not enough seek for strength to abstract their attention from wandering thoughts and earthly cares. Hence it arises, that they do not so fully partake of the evidence of Divine superintending regard—of those consolations which the Lord in mercy grants to such as hunger and thirst after righteousness. This unwatchfulness, we apprehend to be a principal cause that so many are found to neglect our First-day afternoon meetings. And we entreat those who are thus deficient, to consider whether they are not preferring ease, and an indulgence in the pleasures of life, to the obligations of religious duty, and the possession of spiritual riches.

We believe that all who are faithful in the christian practice to which we have just alluded, will on reflection, discover that their care is not to be confined only to themselves. We therefore, exhort Friends, whether in towns or in the country, whether engaged in trade or in agriculture, to be watchful over their children and dependants, and in love to use their influence to prevent them from associating with improper company, on the days set apart for public worship. Where a consistency of conduct in this respect is observed, it is instructive to others; and its effects are, we doubt not, beneficially felt, on resuming the necessary cares of life. The offering of a word of counsel on this and on all occasions where it may appear needed, in tenderness to the object of it, and in the flowings of pure love, is worthy of the attention of all classes of our members.

And now, dear Friends, who fill the important station of parents, permit us to express the warm interest which we have felt on your account, and on that of your offspring. It has often been the concern of this meeting to recommend, (and again feeling its importance we desire to enforce the advice,) that your interesting charge may from very early life, be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Let it be your earnest and tender care to subject their wills, and thus prepare them to bear the cross of Christ. Cultivate in their minds, as far as is in your power, the fear and love of God, and a strict regard to truth and integrity. Neglect no endeavours to preserve them in innocence, and let them be early habituated to simplicity of dress and manner, and to restraints from indulgencies inconsistent with our christian profession. As their infant minds expand, may it be your care frequent-

ly to direct their attention to the gentle intimations of the spirit of Christ, which are often to be distinctly perceived in childhood. One great instrument in forming the mind to piety and virtue, is a well-grounded knowledge of the Holy Scriptures—a knowledge of the wonderful dealings of Almighty God with his chosen people in ancient times, of those predictions which point out the coming of the Messiah, and of their accomplishment in that most glorious display of Divine love, the sending of his beloved Son, a sacrifice for our sins, and a light to enlighten the world.

But, never forget, that it should be your care to set that example of an humble christian, which so beautifully enforces the pure precepts of the gospel: your own minds must be seasoned with grace; and your labours will only be effectual as they are carried on and blessed by the power of the Spirit of Christ. If, in the discharge of this duty, discouragements should arise, let not these become a cause of dismay. Even these may teach the important lesson, highly necessary to be learned, that it is only as fresh supplies of holy aid are granted, that we can safely labour in this work. The evidence which will at times in mercy be afforded, that Divine Goodness views such efforts with acceptance, and the cheering trust that the continued care of a tender parent may, if not at the time, yet at a future day, be rewarded, are powerful incitements to persevere in the way of well-doing.

And, dear young Friends, earnest have been our desires for your advancement in the way of life and salvation; that you may all not only be professors with us, but by obedience to the Spirit of Christ, become real professors of the truth as it is in Jesus. We are persuaded, that in the eyes of many amongst you, the truth has indeed appeared lovely: why then is there not a full surrender to its power and to its convictions? The Lord loveth an early sacrifice. His numberless blessings call for your gratitude, and your allegiance. And mournful indeed will be the reflection, should your days be lengthened to advanced age, that you have slighted the mercies of a gracious Creator, that you have preferred the love of the world and its fading pleasures, and that there can be no peaceful retrospect on devotedness to his cause.

To you, of this class, who have taken some steps in the right way, we would tenderly offer a few remarks. The youthful mind in its love for the cause of religion, is readily led into action. Here is a fresh call for watchfulness. A benevolent desire to promote the Lord's work in the earth, and to serve their fellow men, may have imperceptibly led some from a close and frequent examination of the state of their own hearts. In mixing in public companies, and in witnessing the success of the ef-

forts that are used to promote the common good, our own minds may be gratified, but our quick perception of spiritual instruction may be weakened. Far be it from this meeting to discourage its members from sharing in those excellent labours, in which we can, consistently with our religious principles, unite. In the universal dispersion of the sacred volume, and in the moral and religious instruction of the poor of this and of other countries, we feel a very lively interest. We rejoice in the progress of these good works; but our earnest concern for all is, that each may seek to know and to abide in his proper station: that they whose field of usefulness is principally within the limits of our own Society, may be faithful to their call, and diligent in their Master's service. And may you, whose labours are more extended, be especially careful, that your exertions for the good of others are adorned and enforced by humility, and by that consistency with our principles, which can only be maintained by watchfulness and prayer: that it may be manifest to all, that the love of Christ operating in the heart, leads you to seek, not the praise of men, but the glory of God.

The awful subject of the punishment of death has at this time deeply impressed our minds. We believe that where the precepts and spirit of our great Lord and Lawgiver have a complete ascendancy, they will lead to the abolition of this practice. The situation of those who have forfeited their liberty by the commission of crime, has also claimed our consideration. We regard such as objects of great compassion, and desire that they may receive the kind assistance of friends who may have it in their power to help them: but this should be coupled with due prudence and discretion, and with that respect to the laws of our country, and to those who administer them, which we have ever believed it our duty to enjoin.

As a choice of Representatives in Parliament is expected soon to take place; we wish to caution all our members against entering into political parties. This meeting has formerly manifested its care on the subject, and we desire that the conduct of such friends as have any share to take therein, may be marked by a Christian demeanour, and that they may show themselves to be truly redeemed from the spirit of contention and tumult.

Finally beloved friends, collectedly and individually, farewell. "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." (2 Cor. xiii. 14.)

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

WILLIAM DILLWORTH CREWDSON,

Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CXLII—1819.

Dear Friends,

We have renewed cause of thankfulness to “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,” (2 Cor. i. 3.) for having permitted us to be again sensible that we are under his protecting care. His love and his ancient goodness have not been withheld from us in this our annual assembly; and under a fresh persuasion that He is still graciously willing to do us good, we invite all our dear Friends to offer their hearts to his disposal. In the wilderness of this life, dangers assail us on every hand: but if we look with entire reliance unto Christ, the great head of the church, he will lead us safely along; he will protect us from being entangled by the briars and thorns; he will shield us from the sun, and from the storm; he will permit us to know his voice, and to distinguish it from the voice of the stranger; and humbly to believe that we are of that “one fold,” (John x. 16. verse 28.) of which he is the everlasting Shepherd,—that he will give unto us eternal life, and that none shall pluck us out of his hand. How inviting are these truths! how animating are these assurances!

But this attainment is to be ours, only as we look in faith unto Him, who declared, “if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke ix. 23.) To deny ourselves, and take up the cross, are duties which we desire earnestly to press upon all. If we seek for divine aid that this may become the daily engagement of our lives, we shall be induced to make a narrow scrutiny into our thoughts, and into the motives which influence our conduct. Frequent self-examination will convince us that we are frail, and unworthy of the Lord’s mercies. A conviction of our own weakness and transgressions will make us fearful of speaking of the errors of others; and tend to restrain us from tale-bearing and detraction. At the same time, divine love operating on our hearts, and begetting there the love of our neighbour, will constrain us to offer a word of counsel, in a way most calculated to produce the desired effect on such as we deem deficient in moral or religious duty.

Precious and very desirable is a humble, contrite, teachable state of mind, in which the earnest prayer is raised, that we may live in the love and fear of our great Creator, and in all things walk acceptably before him. Oh! that all may be kept in the low valley

of humility, where the dew remains long ; where they will know the Lord to be "as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." (Isa. xxxii. 2.) Here preservation is witnessed within the holy enclosure : here we are guarded against the snares which beset those who would make haste to be rich. How safe, how necessary it is, for the humble Christian to set out well ; to watch against the first temptation to covet great things ! Sweet is the condition of the grateful mind ; sweet is a state of contentment and of daily dependance on the Lord.

The amount of the sufferings of our friends in Great Britain and Ireland, as reported to this meeting, is upwards of fifteen thousand six hundred pounds. A very small proportion of these has been incurred for military purposes, whilst the remainder has arisen from the support of our Christian testimony against the payment of tithes, and other demands of an ecclesiastical nature.

We have received an epistle from our dear friends in Ireland, and one from each of the Yearly Meetings in America. It is satisfactory to find in several parts of that continent, friends are alive to the rights and interests of the natives of Africa and their descendants resident among them ; and are endeavouring, by the establishment of schools, to promote the education of their offspring. Their attempts also, to introduce the benefits of civilized life among the native inhabitants of the wilderness, continue to be steady and persevering ; and to be marked in some parts by a cheering degree of success. We are also glad to learn the favourable result of an application to the government of the United States, to secure to some of these natives a title to their lands, previously to an intended subdivision of this property, in order to its being transmitted by legal inheritance.

The continuance of the blessing of peace to this nation has warmed our hearts with gratitude. Our refusal to bear arms is not only a testimony against the violence and cruelty of war, but against a confidence in what is emphatically termed in Scripture, the "arm of flesh : " (2 Chron. xxxii. 8.) it is a testimony to the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and a resignation to suffer, in reliance on the power, the goodness, the protection, and the providence of the Almighty. Let us, even now, seek to have our trust so firmly fixed on this unfailing source of help, that if our faith should be ever again put to the test, we may have ground to look with humble confidence to Him in whom we have believed.

Dear Friends, if we are quickened by the power of the Son of God, we shall not be idle spectators in the world, nor indolent occupiers of the talents with which we are entrusted ; and however varied our allotments may be, each will see that he has duties, and very important duties to fulfil, in this state of existence. We shall,

however, find that it becomes the pious Christian to wait to know his exertions for the good of others regulated and sanctified by the Spirit of his Lord. We shall seek to be preserved from suffering by the friendship and intercourse of the world; and we shall see the necessity of continued watchfulness, that neither our own minds, nor those of our tender offspring, may be drawn aside from the simplicity and purity of the truth as it is in Jesus. Our early predecessors received this truth by convincement; they made great sacrifices to obtain an establishment therein, and having thus purchased their possession, they were careful not lightly to esteem it, nor to exchange it for any inferior object; but let us ever bear in mind that the salvation of the soul cannot be inherited by birth-right, nor imparted by education. It is an individual work, indispensably necessary for every man to know wrought in him through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Let us then, each seek to fill his allotted station in the church, that in the day of righteous decision, we may all be found worthy to stand before God in Zion.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
Amen.”

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by

WILLIAM DILLWORTH CREWDSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this year.

EPISTLE CXLIII—1820.

Dear Friends,

It hath pleased our heavenly Father again to permit us to meet for transacting the concerns of our religious society; and we have, from time to time, in the course of this meeting, had reverently to acknowledge the continuance of his love towards us. We have partaken of the fellowship of the Gospel; of that fellowship in which our predecessors, valiant for the Truth, were comforted in the day of persecution; and which has been a strength to the true

believers from the earliest periods of the Christian Church : we therefore again feel engaged to offer the salutation of our love to all our dear friends, wherever they may be situated, with earnest desires that they may become united one unto another in Christ Jesus, our Holy Head.

The amount of the sufferings of our friends, as reported to this meeting, on account of tithes and other ecclesiastical demands, is upwards of sixteen thousand pounds.

Our distant brethren have been again brought to our remembrance by an Epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Ireland, and one from each of those established on the American continent. It is encouraging to us to observe, that these communications bespeak a continued solicitude for the prosperity of the cause of Truth. By those from America, we find that the welfare of their Indian neighbours, and the rights of the injured African race, are still dear to our friends on the other side of the Atlantic, and that, as favourable opportunities occur, they are publicly advocating the cause of justice and mercy.

This meeting has been deeply affected on hearing that the Slave-trade, notwithstanding its abolition by our legislature, and by various foreign powers, still exists with the horrors consequent upon it, to a lamentable extent ; and although the way does not immediately open for much to be done by us, on behalf of the objects of this nefarious and cruel traffic, we earnestly commend them to your continued remembrance and commiseration.

We have been again occupied in investigating the state of our Society ; and our present concern is, to turn the attention of all our dear friends to a strict examination of their religious profession and experience. We profess to believe in the inward teachings of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, our Redeemer and Mediator, our Advocate with the Father ;—of Him whose precious blood was shed, that he might procure unto us eternal life, and present us holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable unto God. Let us individually inquire, how far we are acting in conformity with the solemn truths of the Gospel. Are we seeking in humble supplication unto the Lord, that our faith may be established therein ? Are we, in patient waiting before him, desiring that we may clearly discover the inshinings of his light upon our understandings, and that by walking in faith, according to its manifestations, our lives may be spent in the love and fear of our great Creator ?

It is of unspeakable importance to all, that they should know their own wills and dispositions regulated and sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit. If this engagement of heart be earnest and frequent, humble views of ourselves ensue, a distrust in our

rational powers as sufficient for the great work of salvation is induced: we are taught the inestimable blessing which those enjoy who attain to a reliance on Holy aid; and, whilst we are brought low in our own estimation, and are fearful to speak of our religious attainments, we are enabled to rejoice in Him in whom we have believed. The time spent in silence, in our meetings for divine worship, would then be productive of spiritual refreshment, and our beloved brethren, in their remote and solitary allotments, for whom we feel a tender sympathy, would, in their small assemblies, be animated by the presence of Him whose promises are unailing. (Mat. xviii. 20. and xxviii. 20.)

When the christian temper predominates in our meetings for discipline, this salutary provision for the exercise of gospel love and care, and for the purpose of reclaiming and restoring those who may be overtaken with a fault, is administered not only with kindness and meekness, but in the authority of truth; and each being watchful over his own spirit, those engaged in the business of these meetings would then conduct it with weight, and in brotherly condescension; and they would prove to be times of deep instruction.

Our christian principles teach us to live in the world aright, but not to live unto the world. If we indeed seek to be redeemed from its spirit; if it be our daily concern that our garments may be kept unspotted by its defilements; that we may be clothed with the meekness and gentleness of Christ; we shall be enabled to discharge our civil and religious duties with holy propriety, and to adorn the gospel in our lives and conversation. In times, in which the public feelings may be agitated by civil or political questions of general interest, or by such as involve the vital principles of our faith, the humble christian, thus prepared, will retire to the place of true inward prayer. He will see the necessity of carefully suppressing in his own mind the first emotions of party zeal; but he will feel the advantage of cherishing a willingness to suffer, whether little or much, whether in secret exercise of mind, or in outward trials, to promote the cause of his Lord, who suffered so much for him. He will not view with indifference any open, or less direct, attacks upon those blessed truths on which his hope of salvation is founded. He will not be improperly solicitous for his own ease and security, when he sees difficulties or trouble threatening those around him: his great concern will be that he may in no way bring reproach on his high profession; but that by acknowledging the Lord in all his ways, He may direct his paths. (Prov. iii. 6.)

The love of the world operates in different ways, to turn us aside from the path of holiness. We believe that it leads many to

gratify themselves in dress and language, in a way inconsistent with christian simplicity. We are convinced that this departure from our well-known testimony, is an inlet to greater temptations, and we believe that where this salutary restraint is found to be irksome, a desire to throw it off, tends to retard the spiritual growth. We therefore, affectionately entreat those who may be thus disposed, to consider well the motives for their conduct, and to reflect whether by this unwillingness to take up the cross to their natural inclinations, they are not so far declining to become the disciples of Christ. (Luke xiv. 27.)

Dear young Friends, your advancement in the way of piety and virtue, continues to be a subject of our earnest solicitude. We tenderly exhort you all to cherish the belief, to seek to be established in the conviction, that your heavenly Father, as you look in faith unto Him, will assist you by his good spirit to overcome every thing that is wrong, and to live acceptably in his sight. Be very careful then, we beseech you, not to read publications which openly, or indirectly, inculcate a disbelief in the benefits procured to us by the sufferings and death of Christ, in the divinity of Him our Lord and Saviour, or in the perceptible guidance of his spirit. On the contrary, in silent retirement before the Lord, seek after the contriting influence of his love, in sincere desire that in his own time, it may please him, that you also may richly partake of that consolation and strength which are the portion of his faithful, dependant children. And, as we can rejoice in the persuasion that many of you have yielded to the visitations of Divine Love, we wish to encourage these to hold on in the path of dedication, to continue to love the Lord, and to desire to know and to do his will.

May these, may all our dear Friends, be impressed with the continued necessity of watchfulness unto prayer, and of being clothed with humility, as with a garment. The faithful disciple will guard against relying too much on former experience; he will find that an increase of years produces an increasing conviction that we are entirely dependant upon God for fresh supplies of strength; but he will be animated to persevere, from the consoling hope that if faith and patience continue, Christian virtues will increase; humility, meekness, and liveliness of spirit will be prevalent in advanced life; and a final admission will be granted into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by
JOSIAH FORSTER,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

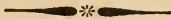
FRIENDS' BOOKS,

FOR SALE

BY SAMUEL WOOD & SONS, NEW-YORK ;

AND

BY SAMUEL S. WOOD & CO. BALTIMORE.



Account of the Convincement and religious progress of John Spalding.

Barclay's Apology.

Barclay's Catechism.

Bevan's view of the Doctrines of the Christian Religion.

Chalkey's (Thomas) works.

Christian Advices, by the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia.

Davideis ; the life of David, King of Israel, a poem by Thomas Ellwood.

Duties of Religion and Morality, by Henry Tuke.

Ellwood's Sacred History 3 vols.

Examples for Youth, in Remarkable Instances of Early Piety, by William Rawes, Junr.

Fothergill's Sermons.

Fry's Poems.

Journal of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, &c. of George Fox. 2 vols.

Journal of the Life of John Gratton.

Journal of the Life of Job Scott.

Journal of John Churchman.

Journal of John Griffith.

Kersey's Treatise of the Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion.

Letters of William Thompson, with a Sketch of his Life.

Life of Daniel Stanton.

Life of Jane Pearson.

Life of Margaret Lucas.

Life of Samuel Neale.

Life of Mary Neale.

Life of Patience Brayton.

Life of Sarah Grubb.

Life of Samuel Bownas.

Life of Sarah Stephenson.

Life of Anthony Benezet.

Life of William Penn, 2 vols. by Thomas Clarkson, M. A.

Life, Letters, and Poems of John Marriot.

Life of Mary Alexander.

Memoir of Hannah Taylor.

Memorials of Ministers of the State of New-York.

Murray's Compendium of Religious Faith and Practice.
 No Cross, no Crown, by William Penn.
 Penn's Reflections and Maxims.
 Phillips' Hints respecting Regeneration.
 Phillips' Defence of the Principles and Practices of the people
 called Quakers.
 Piety Promoted, 10th part by James Gurney Bevans.
 Portraiture of Quakerism, 3 vols. by Thomas Clarkson, M. A.
 Phipps' Original and Present State of Man.
 Selections from the Works of Issac Penington.
 Scott on Baptism.
 Scott's (Samuel) Diary.
 Sewell's History of the Quakers, 2 vols.
 Strength in Weakness, Manifest in the Life, Trials, &c. of Eliza-
 beth Stirredge.
 Tuke's Principles of Religion.
 Usher's Letters.
 Woolman's Serious Considerations.
 Woolman's Works.
 Willis' Reply to Hibbard.
 Willis' Reply to Scott.
 Wells on War.

JUST PUBLISHED.

Extracts from the Papers of Edwin Price, late of Neath Abbey,
 Glamorganshire, with an account of his last illness and death.
 Memoirs of the life and religious experience of William Lewis,
 late of Bristol, to which are added extracts from Letters, ad-
 dressed by him to individuals, on different occasions.
 New editions of the following works, viz. The Spiritual Guide, an
 abstract from a larger work, by Michael de Molinos.
 The Life and Religious Experience of the celebrated Lady Gui-
 on ; (translated from the French ;) exhibiting her eminent Pie-
 ty, Travels, and Sufferings. To which are annexed a selec-
 tion of her Poems, and an Appendix, containing a short ac-
 count of the Lives of Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, Mi-
 chael de Molinos, and St. Teresa. Also a new translation of the
 Short and Easy Method of Prayer.
 A Guide to True Peace ; or a method of attaining to inward and
 spiritual Prayer ; compiled chiefly from the writings of Fenelon,
 Archbishop of Cambray, Lady Guion, and Michael de Moli-
 nos.

NOTICE.

Ellwood's Sacred History, having been out of print several years,
 will probably be republished in the course of the present year.

New-York, 5th mo. 1821.

LONDON EPISTLES

New York, 1821

Bound in full brown marbled sheep.

When received the binding was intact but the leather was rotten. The sewing structure was sound.

Treatment: The sewing was reinforced with stabjoint endsheets of Antique Ingres. A 50/50 mixture of Jade 403 and methylcellulose was used against the textblock. The book was cased in full grey buckram with a red Canson Ingres paper label on the spine.

Ellen Anne Owings

1985

